

# THE TREASURES OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL



MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL PROPERTIES, INC.



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NEW YORK





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THE SENSATIONAL BASE BALL  
WAKE ME UP





# CONTENTS

Foreword/Introduction	4	The 1960s	34
The 19th Century	6	Starting Pitchers	36
The 1900s	8	Broadcasters	38
Walking off in the World Series	10	The 1970s	40
The 1910s	12	Outfielders	42
Collectibles	14	Managers	44
The 1920s	16	The 1980s	46
Babe Ruth and the Yankees	18	Infielders	48
The 1930s	20	The 1990s	50
The 1940s	22	Ballparks	52
Breaking Barriers	24	Relief Pitchers	54
Catchers	26	Equipment	56
The 1950s	28	The 2000s	58
Expansion and Relocation	30	The World Baseball Classic	60
Owners	32	Credits	62



1979 OFFICIAL BALTIMORE

ORIGINAL

POS.

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Singleton RF

Murray 1B

5

Lowenstein LF

6

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7

Dempsey C

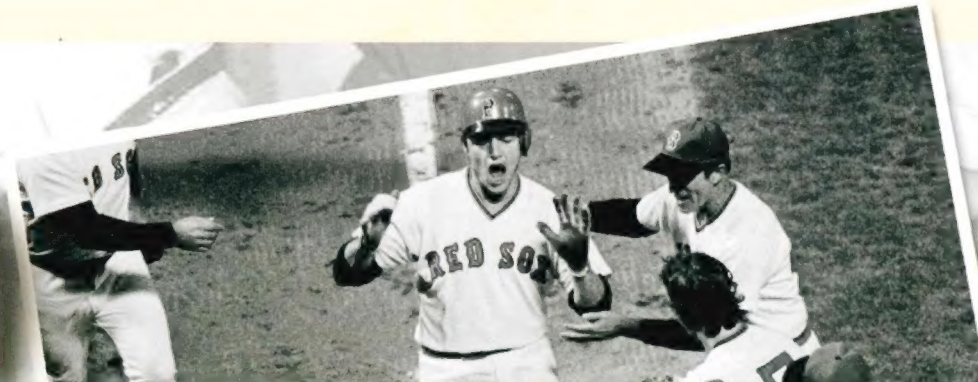
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# FOREWORD

BY TOMMY LASORDA



IT HAPPENS TO all of us baseball lovers every so often. An upstart

team, a magical moment or a remarkable player will capture our imagination. It will pull us in like bees to honey. We invest ourselves in it, want to get right up close and experience it for ourselves.

Joe DiMaggio's hitting streak was one of many that did it for me. In 1941, I followed those 56 games intently. I was 14 years of age and I found myself completely captivated by what The Yankee Clipper was able to accomplish day after productive day. My love for baseball was enhanced by my shared Italian-American heritage with arguably the game's biggest star.

When Cleveland's third baseman, Ken Keltner, stopped DiMaggio's run with a pair of great defensive plays in late July, I, like so many around the United States, was disappointed. That's the power of the national pastime. It has a tremendous ability to excite our emotions. Records are made to be broken, yet this streak is still uncontested.

As manager of the Dodgers and later the U.S. Olympic team, I've had a front-row seat to a host of other special moments. I'll never forget Kirk Gibson's heroics in Game 1 of the 1988 World Series, Fernandomania in 1981, or winning the gold medal with Team USA in

2000. I've been blessed with so many amazing experiences in baseball that my list of stories could fill up a book in and of itself.

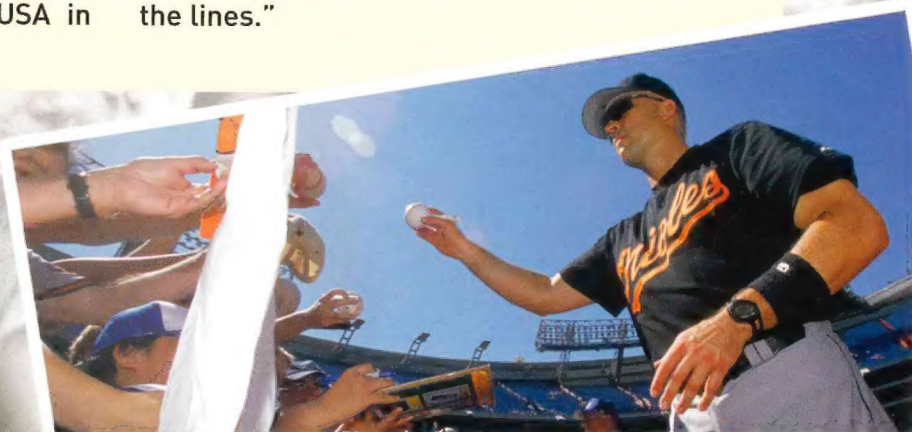
For the casual fan, so much of this game is unseen. You can watch reel after reel of archived footage of Lou Gehrig setting new standards for playing every day. But you have little idea of the effort it takes to do it. You can witness a dominant start by Don Drysdale at Dodger Stadium. Yet it's impossible to go back to his amateur days and break down what scouts saw in him. What was it about his personality that made him likely to succeed at the game's highest level? You can sit in the stands at Comiskey Park, but did you ever wonder just what the architect, Zachary Taylor Davis, was thinking when he designed the place?

The artifacts contained in this great book will take you to places that you haven't been — behind the scenes of our nation's pastime. You can read the letter Gehrig wrote to his wife about ending his streak, look through Branch Rickey's scouting report of Drysdale, and take in Davis's original plans for Chicago's Comiskey Park inch by inch. It's all here for you to hold in your hands. Now everyone has a front-row seat to the history of the game.

Enjoy it, savor it and learn more about all of the interesting things that happen "outside the lines."



Roberto Clemente





# INTRODUCTION

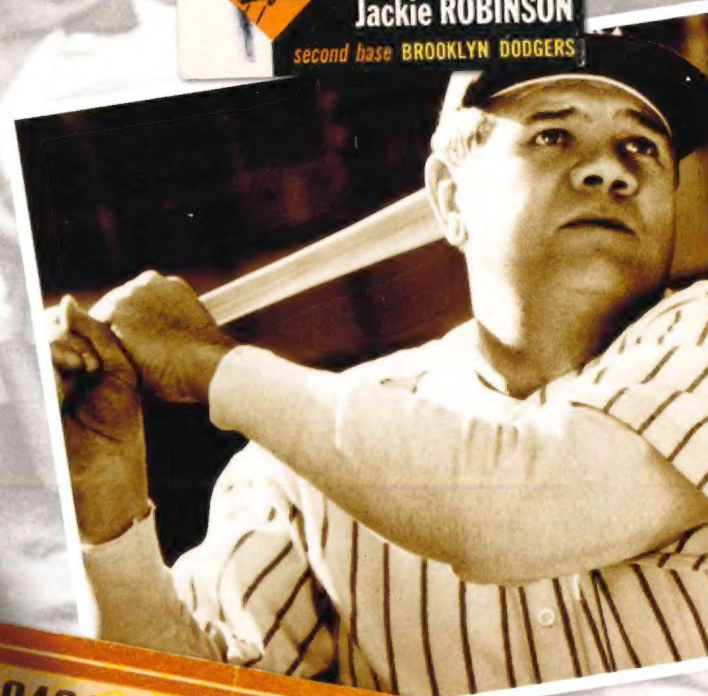
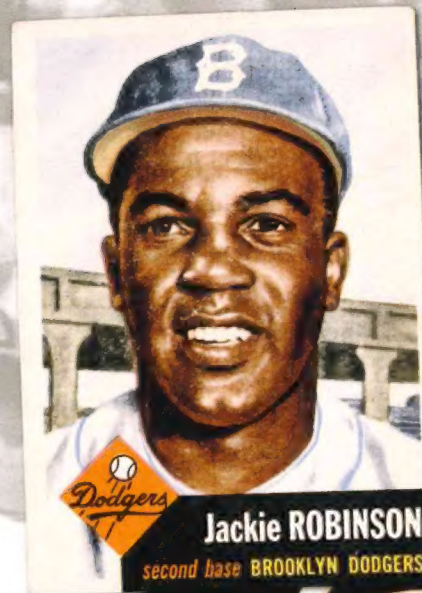
TO ABSORB BASEBALL'S complete story, from invention to modern-day treasure, could be an overwhelming task. Thousands of times per year, for more than 100 years, the best players in the world have stepped onto Major League fields for nine innings or more of great baseball. The games have been saturated with storylines and drama; the individuals involved have had their own personal histories to tell. To read accounts of every participant and every contest would be a daunting challenge. However, this book details some of the most incredible.

What follows is a taste of some of the most interesting people and fascinating events that have played an important role over the course of baseball's rise to prominence. Many, like the great 1961 season for instance, have themselves, in fact, become the inspiration for articles, books or movies. And when pulled together, as they are here, these stories offer a strong sense of how baseball has evolved into an international phenomenon.

To enhance your reading experience, important artifacts — which have been reproduced for you to examine — accompany many of these histories. Some, like the letters and diary entries that are included, will give you a sense of what a player was like away from the ballpark — how the major events that took

place between the lines impacted his thinking. Others, such as the scorecards, ticket stubs and baseball cards, allow you to appreciate historically great games and talented players as if they were still making headlines today. Hold a stub to a classic game like you were about to step through the turnstile. Read the back of a baseball card as if you just pulled apart the packaging for the first time.

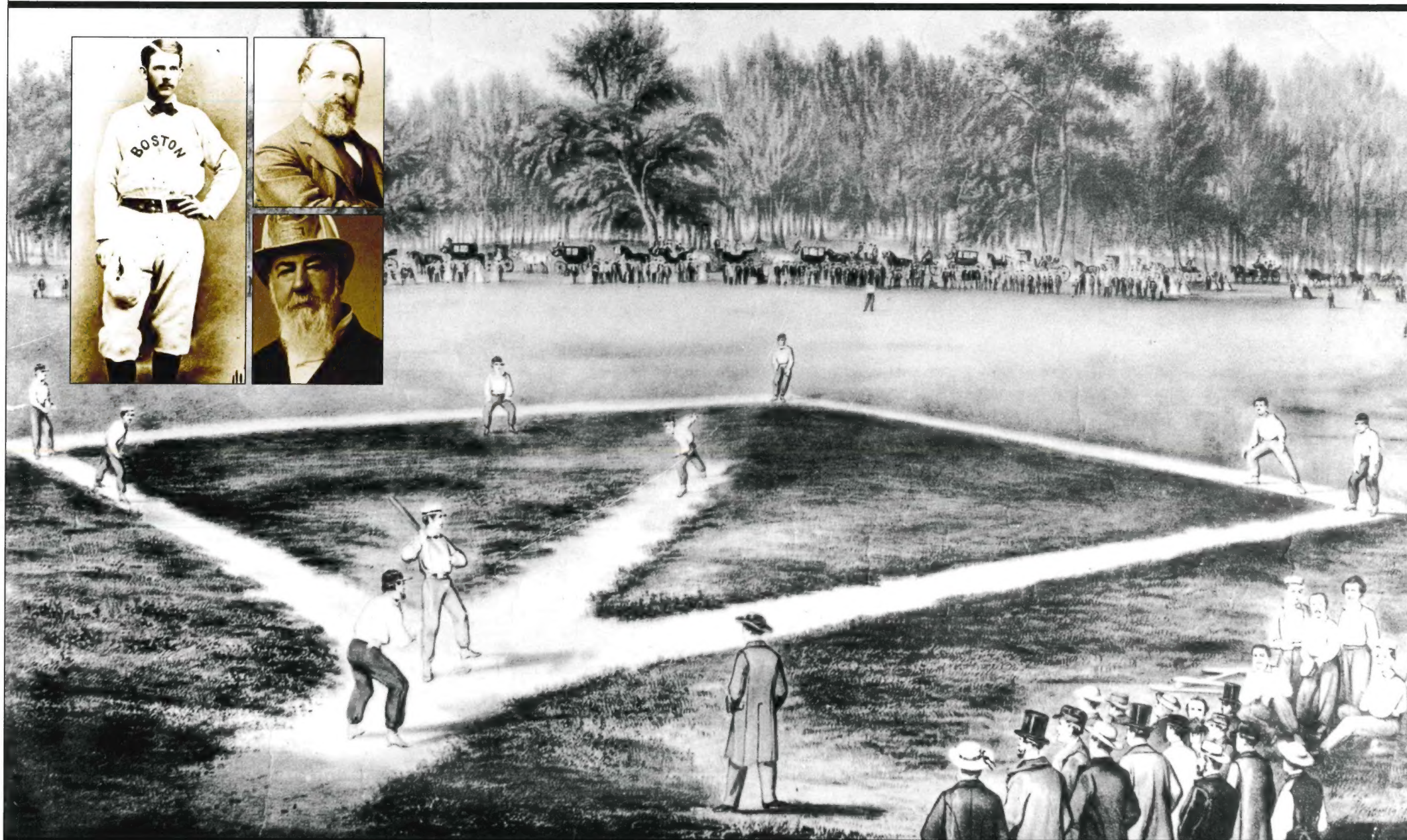
So as baseball continues to take root in every corner of the globe, enjoy these stories as a glimpse of the path the game has taken to get here. Let the players and the games — and the artifacts they have left behind — excite you in the way they have generations of baseball fans.





# THE 19th CENTURY

Tracing baseball's rise from **INVENTION** to national acclaim.



◆ **MAIN IMAGE:** AN EARLY DEPICTION OF BASEBALL. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** ALBERT SPALDING, HENRY CHADWICK AND ALEXANDER CARTWRIGHT ALL HAD A BIG IMPACT ON THE GAME'S EVOLUTION. SPALDING, THE FUTURE SPORTING GOODS MOGUL, ALSO WAS A BIG-TIME PITCHER. IN ORDER TO PROVE THAT BASEBALL WAS A PURELY AMERICAN PASTIME, HE FORMED A SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ITS ORIGINS. THE GROUP SUGGESTED THAT AN EARLY VERSION OF BASEBALL WAS DEVELOPED AND PLAYED IN COOPERSTOWN, N.Y., THANKS LARGELY TO ABNER DOUBLEDAY. CHADWICK IS THE INVENTOR OF THE BOX SCORE, WHICH REMAINS AN IMPORTANT BASEBALL TOOL, WHILE CARTWRIGHT, A MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK KNICKERBOCKERS, DRAFTED AN EARLY VERSION OF THE RULES.



**“The key to my success,” Cy Young once told *Central Press* sportswriter Walter L. Johns, “was that I was never wild. I could put the ball where I wanted to.”**

**P**ERHAPS IT'S FITTING that any attempt to identify the exact origins of baseball inspires healthy debate. If there is one thing that has united the game's fans from one generation to the next, it's the propensity to argue back and forth over topics large and small. For historians, the answer to the question of who is the father of the game has proved ambiguous. And there are at least a handful of contenders with their names in the hat.

At the core of the discussion is the idea that baseball evolved from a game previously played in England — English Base-ball or a children's spin-off called rounders. While bat and ball games date back to ancient Egypt, none are as similar to baseball as those seen in Britain during the 18th and 19th centuries.

These were key for Hall of Famer Henry Chadwick, who as the game's first significant reporter (he invented the box score) has himself been labeled “The Father of Baseball.” Despite numerous differences between the English games and baseball, Chadwick devoted much of his writing to promoting the theory that the English games became America's national pastime.

Albert Spalding, also a chief promoter of the game and an ardent patriot, made his own contribution to the timeline of events. In 1905, he formed a special committee, the Mills Commission, to investigate. The commission, with the support of the testimony of Abner Graves, a one-time resident of Cooperstown, N.Y.,

among other things, suggested that Abner Doubleday perfected baseball in Cooperstown in 1839. In a letter to the group, Graves recalled a day when Doubleday improved the ball-playing of some local boys with changes like placing four bases on the field and limiting the number of players on a side to 11.

With further research, new theories emerged as to how the game came to be. Regardless, the Mills Commission has had a lasting impact on the sport, offering it a home and thus a site for the National Baseball Hall of Fame, which itself is an important piece of Americana.

Further investigation has suggested that a bat and ball game was played informally, beginning in 1842, at Madison Avenue and 27th Street in New York City. Just a few years later, the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club of New York was established.

Among the collection of young men, a group of Manhattanites who found space to play in Hoboken, N.J., was Alexander Cartwright, who, in 1845, wrote a set of rules for the club's brand of baseball. These new guidelines included the establishment of foul lines, three strikes as an out and three outs as an inning. The first game with the rules was played on June 19, 1846, at Elysian Field in Hoboken.

Another Knickerbockers player, Daniel Adams, also plays prominently into the game's early history. At a meeting with other amateur clubs in 1857, Adams chaired a rules committee that made important changes to the sport, like putting a nine-inning cap on games and moving the distance between the bases to 90 feet.

Thanks to such changes, the game was off and running. By the mid-1860s, thousands of amateur clubs had been organized. Then, in 1869, the leaders of one club, the Cincinnati Red Stockings, took the step of paying the team's players to suit up.

At the time, players supposedly were competing for the pure joy of the game. Although it was a common practice for teams

to hire the most skilled ballplayers, their salaries weren't discussed publicly. The Red Stockings, though, recruited the finest players they could find and gave them between \$600 and \$1,400 for the season. The idea came from Harry Wright, a pitcher, outfielder and the team's manager.

The results of the move could be seen immediately. The Red Stockings dominated teams from Cincinnati to Philadelphia, New York, D.C. and back again, reeling off more than 80 straight victories. Cincinnati finally lost to Brooklyn in 1870, an 8-7 defeat still considered by many to be one of the greatest games ever played.

Although the streak had come to an end, its impact was massive. Cities all over, impressed by the Red Stockings' success, were rounding up players to try to compete. Professional baseball was beginning to take flight.

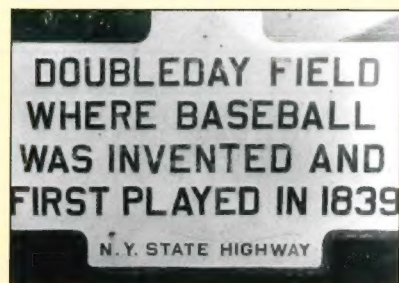
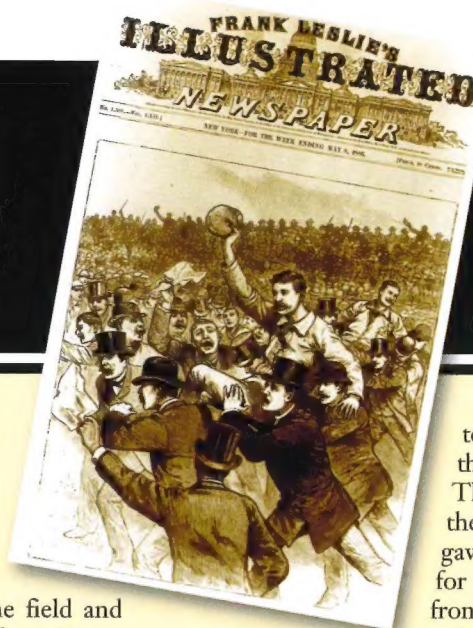
In 1871, the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players was formed. Eventually, it would come to be replaced by the National League. Other leagues, like the American Association in the early 1880s and the Western (later American) League about a decade later, soon came to challenge for fans, as well.

The AL, founded by President Ban Johnson in 1900, would prove a formidable foe for the National League, as it was able to swipe dozens of the NL's most talented players. One of those players was pitcher Cy Young, a tall and prodigiously strong righty who won 511 games over an impressive 22-year Big League career, which began in 1890.

He was born Denton True Young and picked up his nickname in the Minor Leagues after he threw a wild pitch that ripped up part of the ballpark's grandstand. An observer said it looked like a cyclone had hit the park, and a nickname was born.

His nickname was the most colorful thing about him. Young was a bashful farmer whose idea of a good time was chopping wood. He also could pitch. Eventually, Young would become the second-winningest hurler of the 1890s. He still is considered one of the finest hurlers of all time.

◆ MEDIA INTEREST IN THE GAME INCREASED DRAMATICALLY, AS BASEBALL CLUBS SPROUTED UP IN MORE AND MORE CITIES DURING THE 1880s.



◆ LEFT: “THE DOUBLEDAY BALL” IS AN EARLY RELIC FROM THE FIRST EXHIBITIONS. ABOVE: A SIGN FROM THE FIELD IN COOPERSTOWN LAYING CLAIM TO THE GAME'S ORIGIN.

## ENCLOSURES

A photo card of the 1869 Cincinnati Red Stockings, available to fans as a souvenir. Albert Spalding's diagram tracing the origins of the sport.



# THE 1900s

The game's first **MODERN DECADE** saw the debut of its most **GIFTED** and **CONTROVERSIAL STAR** yet.



**A**T THE TURN of the century, baseball truly began to take its modern shape. Foul balls were counted as strikes beginning in 1901, and a newly created showdown between the American and National leagues, the World's Series (as it was known then), first took place in 1903.

Two years later, the game saw the debut of perhaps its greatest player, Ty Cobb, who entered the league with the Tigers in 1905 at age 18.

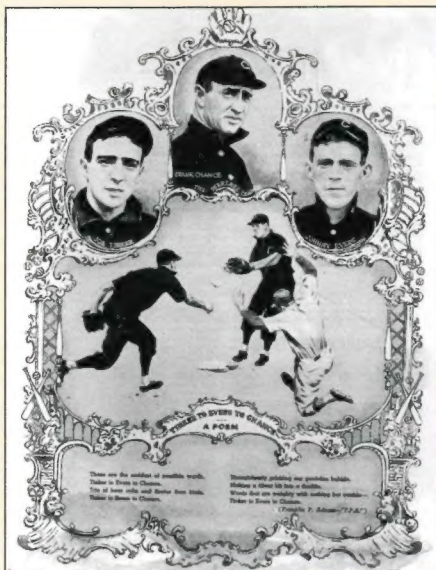
Cobb, a native of Royston, Ga., nicknamed "The Georgia Peach," played in just 41 games that year. But he would go on to rap a then-record 4,191 hits over 24 seasons, during which he primarily played center field. He hit better than .300 23 straight times and surpassed .400 three times. He also scored more than 2,200 runs, stole 892 bases and added 297 triples.

It could seem unreasonable to suggest that the modern fan under-rates Cobb. A member of the inaugural class of the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1936, to this day he is mentioned in the same breath as Babe Ruth and Cy Young, players whose legends are bigger than the game.

There was a time, though, when the debate over the best ever really wasn't much of a debate at all. A 1942 poll in which managers chose the greatest player of all time picked Cobb ahead of Ruth. Casey Stengel — who managed Joe DiMaggio and Mickey Mantle, and played against Ruth — declared, "I never saw anyone like Ty Cobb."

There are a number of reasons why the race has tightened with time.

While Cobb's offensive numbers are staggering, his 117 career home runs would appear to put him a step behind legends like Ruth and Hank Aaron. But hitting home runs was never desirable to Cobb, who was openly contemptuous of Ruth's longball numbers. Cobb claimed that his own style was more "scientific," and that anyone could hit home runs if he tried. To prove his point, he announced to a group of sportswriters in 1925, "Gentlemen, pay close attention today. For the first time in my life, I will be



◆ **JOE TINKER, FRANK CHANCE AND JOHNNY EVERS, CUBS INFELDERS, HONORED IN A FRANKLIN P. ADAMS POEM.**

deliberately going for home runs." He hit five in the next two games, and then went back to "real hitting."

In addition, a bit of Cobb's mystique may be lost on fans that never saw him take the diamond. "The greatness of Ty Cobb was something that had to be seen," said Hall of Famer George Sisler, "and to see him was to remember him forever."

Then there was his temperamental personality, which has come to dominate Cobb's modern image. In his 1994 book, Al Stump wrote that Cobb suffered "acute self-worship" and "delusions of persecution." And like many at the time, the quick-tempered Cobb also was a racist.

But those quick to judge Cobb merely as brutal and self-centered should take another look at this complex figure. Part of the reason his personality stood out is that he

had particular ideas about how the game should be played and some felt he was too aggressive in defending them.

Cobb reached his first World Series at age 20 as a member of the 1907 Detroit Tigers. Once there, however, Detroit was steamrolled by the Chicago Cubs, the powerhouse of the day, who were motivated then by a shocking loss a year prior.

The 1906 Series had seen the Fall Classic's first-ever intracity showdown: the Cubs against the White Sox. The Cubs, having won a league-record 116 games, were the prohibitive favorites, due to their dominance and to the AL club's lack of offense. The Sox, in fact, had finished last in the American League in hits, homers and average that year, leading writer Hugh Fullerton to nickname them the "Hitless Wonders."

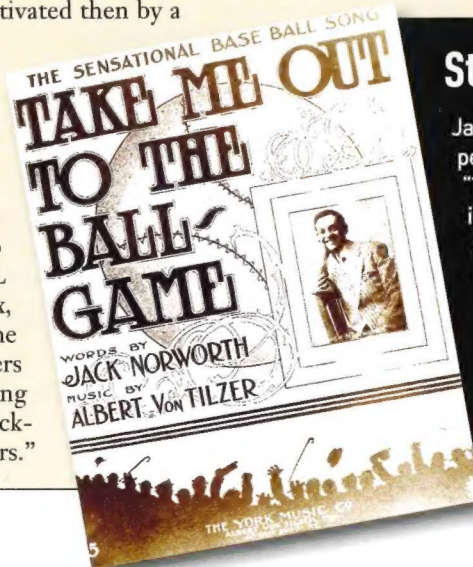
◆ **A MEDALLION FOR THE 1906 WHITE SOX, WHO WERE NICKNAMED "THE HITLESS WONDERS" FOR THEIR LACK OF OFFENSE. THEY SHOCKED THE CUBS IN THE SERIES.**

Snow greeted the Chicago fans in attendance for the first game of that historic meeting. The Sox's staff battled the elements and stifled the Cubs enough in the first four games to earn a split. And then the Sox's bats awoke for Games 5 and 6, as they outscored the Cubs, 16-9, to capture a shocking Series crown.

Plenty of other noteworthy events occurred during the decade. Who could forget Fred Merkle's blunder for the Giants late in the 1908 season? In celebrating an apparent ninth-inning win over the Cubs, Merkle ran off the field without touching second. When the Cubs touched the bag, he was ruled out on a force, negating the run that had scored.

The 1904 season was capped by an event that did not occur, as the leaders of the New York Giants refused to meet the Boston Americans in the World's Series. The Giants front office claimed the team had already won the only championship that mattered by taking the NL title.

A big star at the time was the tall Bucknell man, Christy Mathewson. The Giants, once struggling for wins and fan support, showed up and won it all in 1905, when Mathewson won 31 games. Tragically, he passed away in 1925 from tuberculosis. He was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1936.



## Stretching Music

Jack Norworth, the songwriter responsible for penning the lyrics to baseball's famous anthem, "Take Me Out to the Ball Game", likely had little idea that his words would become a part of every modern-day game. It's possible he didn't even know about the seventh inning itself.

That's because in 1908, when he jotted down the now-famous lines, Norworth had never been to a game. He merely was struck with the idea when he saw a poster on the subway in New York. Albert Von Tilzer then put Norworth's words to music.



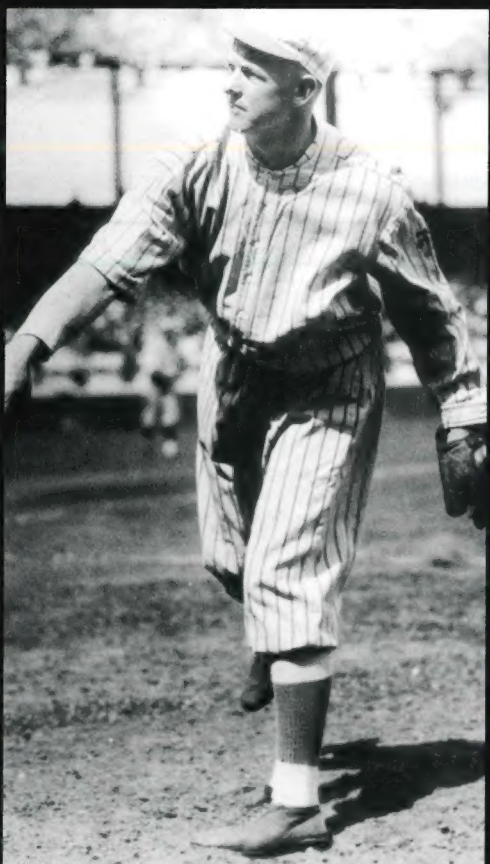
**“The greatest player of all time” is how White Sox owner Charles Comiskey once described Ty Cobb, calling the career Detroit Tiger “an intelligent foe who played with his whole anatomy.”**

#### ENCLOSURES

*Souvenir cards and postcards of Chicago Cubs players from the turn of the century, including Johnny Evers, Frank Chance and Mordecai Brown — all Hall of Famers.*



◆ ABOVE: THE 1906 CHICAGO WHITE SOX STUNNED THE CUBS IN THE FALL CLASSIC. BELOW: THE GIANTS' STAR, CHRISTY MATHEWSON, A FUTURE HALL OF FAMER.



◆ TY COBB SHOWS SOME OF HIS TRADEMARK GRIT WITH A HARD-NOSED SLIDE INTO THIRD BASE. THE FUTURE HALL OF FAMER HAD A MEAN STREAK BETWEEN THE LINES AND AN ARRAY OF BASEBALL SKILLS. AT THE TIME, MANY AROUND THE GAME REGARDED COBB AS THE BEST PLAYER THEY HAD EVER SEEN, AND THE NUMBERS THAT HE PRODUCED AT THE PLATE CERTAINLY SUPPORT THE ASSERTION.



# WALKING OFF IN THE WORLD SERIES

Since its debut in 1903, THE FALL CLASSIC has produced many of the game's most MEMORABLE MOMENTS.

**B**EFORE NAMES LIKE Bill Mazeroski, Kirk Gibson and Joe Carter could become enshrined in October lore, there was 1903, the year that the World Series began at a small, wooden ballpark known as the Huntington Avenue Grounds in Boston. Back then, the event was known as the *World's Series*, a best-of-nine confrontation between the champions of the American and National leagues.

At the time, that initial Series was considered a milestone because it marked the first visible sign of partnership between the two leagues. Ever since the AL declared itself a Major League in 1901, the two had fought a bitter battle for baseball supremacy in America. Contracts were broken, lawsuits were filed and the two sides bickered in the press. Finally, with both seeing that the dispute was getting out of hand, they signed a peace agreement in January 1903.

Then, at the suggestion of Pirates owner Barney Dreyfuss, the pennant-winning Boston Americans and Pittsburgh Pirates (the "h" would be added several years later) agreed to meet in a best-of-nine World's Series to determine the true champion of baseball.

Record crowds made their way to the ballpark for the legendary affair — which was eventually won by Boston, 5 games to 3 — with some paying as much as \$10 for a seat.

Few among them, though, could have recognized what the Series would eventually become. Today, the Fall Classic is an annual October tradition that captivates baseball fans around the globe. It has produced some of the most memorable moments in the game's history and none loom larger than the walk-off hits.

Here are a few of the very best:

**Game 7, 1960:** For fans in Pittsburgh, mere mention of the World Series probably still evokes images of Mazeroski, the Hall of Famer. After all, it was Maz, a defensive wizard at second base, who beat the Yankees in 1960 with the first-ever Series-ending home run.

**“Every day of my life I think of that home run,” says Bill Mazeroski of his Game 7 blast in the 1960 World Series. “Wouldn’t you?”**

It was the bottom of the ninth inning on October 13, the score knotted 9-9, when the 24-year-old Pirate strode to the plate to face New York's Ralph Terry.

Mazeroski had envisioned this particular scenario dozens of times growing up in Wheeling, W.Va. Living in a tiny wooden house with no electricity or running water, the young son of a coal miner had spent many a summer afternoon pretending the fate of his team rested on his narrow shoulders. Often, like so many other kids at that age, he dreamed he was stepping up to bat in the seventh game of the World Series.

Maybe that's why, years later, Mazeroski was able to remain focused in the most pressure-packed scenario imaginable for a player and why he was able to take Terry's 1-0 slider and send it sailing beyond the left-field wall in Pittsburgh and into the history books.

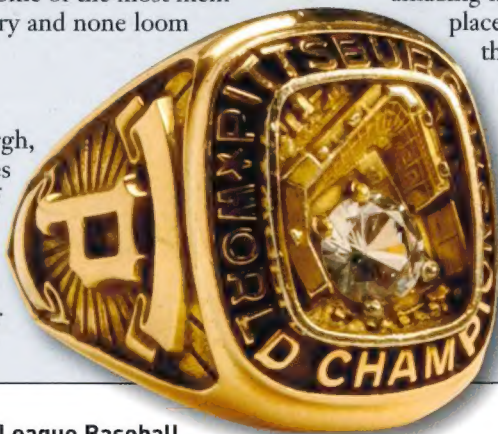
**Game 6, 1975:** Carlton Fisk also managed to find his way into the baseball annals with some of his own World Series heroics. With his team down 3 games to 2 in the 1975 Series, the Red Sox catcher homered off Cincinnati Reds pitcher Pat Darcy in the 12th inning of Game 6 to force a deciding contest. As if the play itself wasn't memorable enough, Fisk's reaction was classic, as he leapt up the first-base line, willing the ball to stay fair with every ounce of his body. When it clanged off of the foul pole in left, Fisk slid in alongside Maz as a hero of October. What's most amazing is that the hit still holds such a special place in the game's history even though the Sox lost the Series the next night.

**Game 1, 1988:** Gibson had perhaps his best season in 1988 — one that would eventually earn him the National League MVP Award.

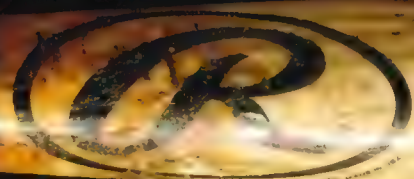
◆ THANKS TO BILL MAZEROSKI'S CLUTCH HOMER OFF OF NEW YORK'S RALPH TERRY, EACH PIRATE TOOK HOME A WORLD SERIES RING IN 1960.



◆ JAWS DROPPED ACROSS AMERICA WHEN BOSTON'S CARLTON FISK (ABOVE, CENTER) AND L.A.'S KIRK GIBSON CRACKED THEIR HISTORIC AND IMPROBABLE WORLD SERIES WALK-OFF HOME RUNS.

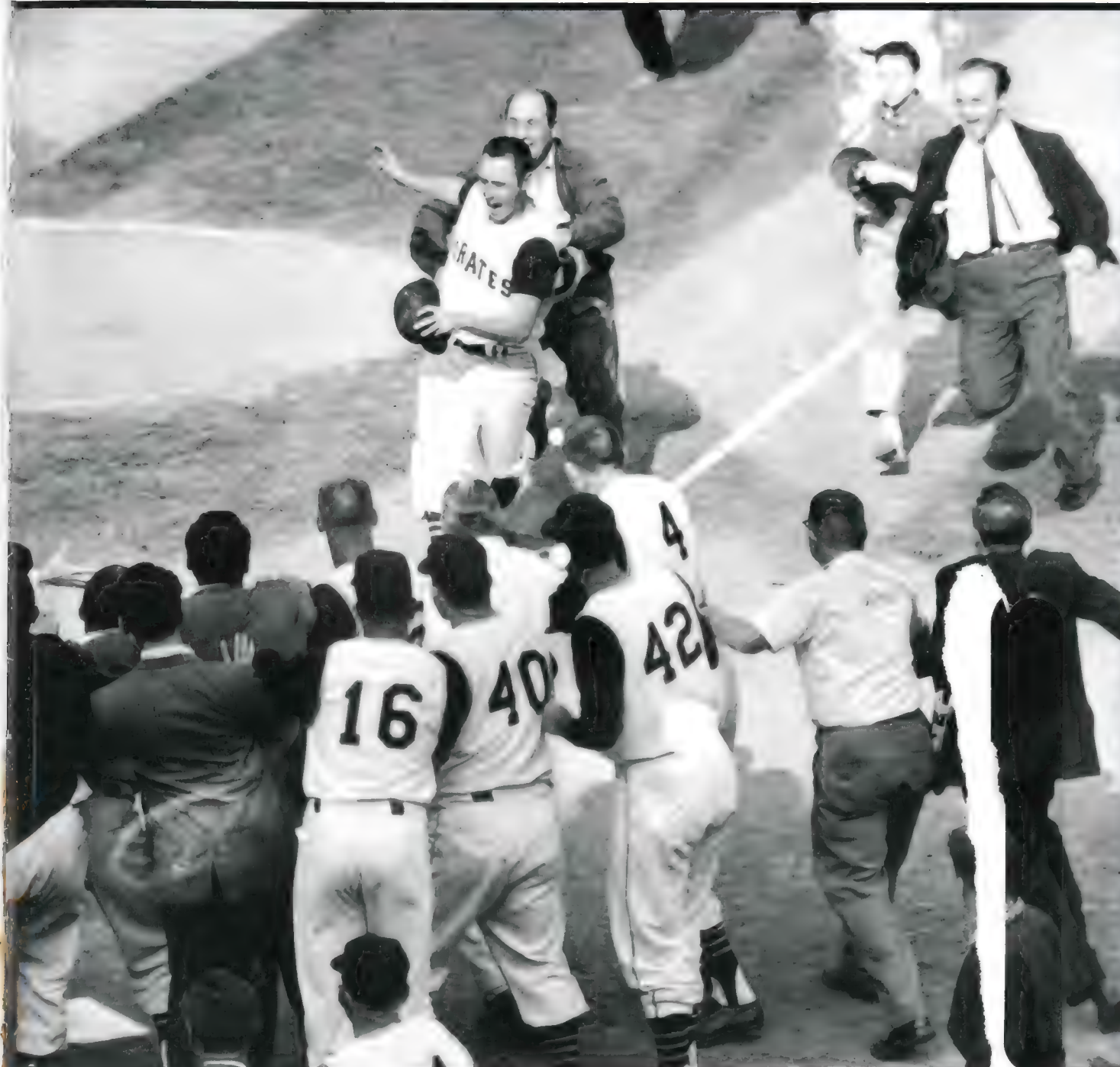






**BIG STICK**  
**LUIS GONZALEZ**  
 DIAMONDBACKS

◆ THE BAT USED BY LUIS GONZALEZ TO DROP A SERIES-WINNING SINGLE BEYOND THE YANKEE INFIELD IN 2001. IT GAVE THE ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS A TITLE IN THEIR FOURTH YEAR.



## ENCLOSURE

*A stub from the 2004 Series, which matched Boston and St. Louis. No walk-offs were needed, as the Sox swept for their first title since 1918.*

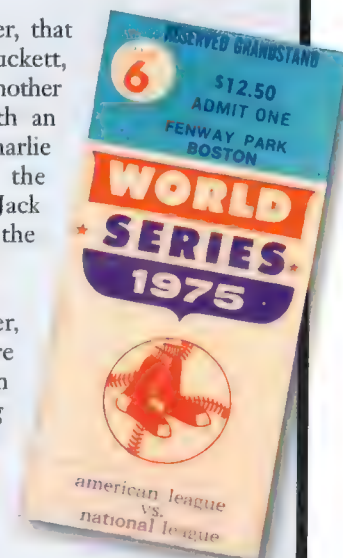
When Los Angeles made it to the Fall Classic, though, Gibson was so hobbled by leg injuries that he was reduced to a bench role. But in the bottom

of the ninth inning of Game 1, he limped out to pinch-hit against Oakland's future Hall of Famer, Dennis Eckersley, who was trying to close out a 4-3 win. Gibson had other plans, though, smashing a 3-2 slider toward the mountains for a 5-4 Los Angeles victory.

**Game 6, 1991:** Three years later, that feat was mirrored by Kirby Puckett, who gave the Minnesota Twins another chance in the 1991 Series with an 11th-inning shot off Atlanta's Charlie Leibrandt in Game 6. And the Twins' party continued when Jack Morris shut down the Braves the very next day, 1-0, to win it all.

**Game 6, 1993:** Toronto's Carter, on the other hand, made sure there would be *no* Game 7 in 1993. He belted a ninth-inning slider from Philadelphia's Mitch Williams toward the roof of the SkyDome in Toronto to end the Fall Classic.

**Game 7, 2001:** The 2001 Series was settled on a much shorter fly ball — a ball, in fact, that barely reached the outfield grass. Yet the hit was as dramatic as any of the aforementioned homers. Arizona's Luis Gonzalez, facing legendary closer Mariano Rivera, dropped a bloop single over a drawn-in New York infield to score Jay Bell for the final run. And with that, Gonzalez took his place alongside the game's impressive list of World Series heroes.



◆ LEFT: FANS MOB BILL MAZEROSKI AS HE REACHES THE PLATE. NEW YORK HAD TIED GAME 7, 9-9, IN THE TOP OF THE NINTH, ONLY TO SEE THE PIRATES TURN THE TIDE JUST A FEW MINUTES LATER. ABOVE: A TICKET STUB FROM THE 1975 SERIES.





# THE 1910s

With the advent of new **BUILDING TECHNOLOGY** came the construction of some of baseball's most **TREASURED PALACES**.

**W**HEN SHIBE PARK opened on the northern outskirts of Philadelphia in early April of 1909, all 16 Major League owners were in attendance to witness the momentous event. At the time of its birth, the ballpark was a massive structure built with a revolutionary new material (reinforced concrete) and a dark green slate roof. It was something the game's proprietors had to see.

While Columbia Park, the previous home of the Philadelphia Athletics, had just enough room for 10,000 fans, Shibe Park was spacious enough to hold 23,000. To fill the stadium, co-owners Ben Shibe and Connie Mack cut ticket prices in half (to 50 cents for the grandstand and a quarter to sit in the bleachers) and even took out an ad in the distant *Chicago Tribune* inviting fans to the opening. Never before had there been such capacity.

Yet Shibe Park was only the beginning. Thanks to the new concrete, stadiums could be made fireproof, bigger and more durable than before, and over the next few years the league would open a number of new baseball palaces. The stadiums would come to define their teams for generations. While players, managers and owners came and went, the new cathedrals would remain symbols of their respective franchises for much longer.

One of the next in line after Shibe Park was Comiskey Park, which opened in Chicago in July of 1910 for the first of its 81 seasons. Charles A. Comiskey, the owner of the team at the time, asked designer Zachary Taylor Davis to create a "true" playing field. As a result, the park's design was symmetrical, 362 feet down both the left- and right-field lines. It was an unusually plain shape at the time, but Comiskey responded that it made the field equally challenging for both left- and right-handed hitters.

Over the years, the dimensions came to be a real point of pride for some White Sox fans, who saw Wrigley Field across town as less than pure, with its ivy-covered and misshapen outfield wall. Interestingly, the same man, Davis, actually designed them both.

**The framework for Wrigley Field was built in about a month, between early March and April 23, 1914, when 21,000 packed in to see the opener.**

He built Wrigley Field (originally named Weeghman Park after Charles H. Weeghman and his ChiFeds of the Federal League) in 1914. But when the Federal League folded in 1915, Weeghman bought the Cubs of the NL and made Davis's new North Side park their home.

Over the years, Wrigley has come to be recognized around the league as a true baseball palace. It's seen as the perfect marriage of the rural and the urban, with its red brick wall covered in ivy (added in 1937), and a quaint setting for baseball.

The same could be said for Fenway Park in Boston, which opened in 1912 and remains a fan favorite. General Charles Henry Taylor, the owner of the team at the

time and a Civil War veteran, commissioned Fenway's construction when he grew tired of the lease for the team's original park, the Huntington Avenue Grounds.

Fenway Park strayed from the mold from the start. Although its most famous appendage, the Green Monster, wasn't added until 1934, it originally had Duffy's Cliff — a 10-foot incline in left field named for outfielder Duffy Lewis.

It also had the New England weather, which could wreak havoc on any game. The park's grand opening was delayed two days by rain. And when the sun did slip through the clouds, it wasn't much better. As the saying still goes, in Boston, "the sun rises in the east and sets in the right fielder's eyes." Not surprisingly, soon after Fenway Park opened, right fielder Harry Hooper became the game's first player to wear sunglasses, according to *Sports Illustrated*.

Along with the new ballparks came new traditions, like the Presidential First Pitch. It began in 1910 with William Howard Taft at a Washington Senators game and it has continued until today.

On the receiving end of Taft's pitch was Walter Johnson, the Hall of Famer who pitched for 21 seasons in D.C. After a very respectable rookie year in 1907, the "Big



◆ CHICAGO'S WRIGLEY FIELD (TOP) AND BOSTON'S FENWAY PARK WERE BUILT DURING THE NEW WAVE OF BALLPARK CONSTRUCTION THAT TOOK PLACE BETWEEN 1909 AND 1915. THEY STILL ARE MAJOR LEAGUE HOMES TODAY.



◆ A PRESS PASS FROM THE 1914 WORLD SERIES, ONE OF FOUR CLASSICS IN WHICH THE A'S PLAYED DURING THEIR FIRST SIX YEARS IN SHIBE PARK.

## ENCLOSURE

The original blueprints for Comiskey Park, which opened for play in 1910 on Chicago's South Side.



# GOLDEN JUBILEE CINCINNATI REDS

*Champions 1869-1919*  
OFFICIAL SOUVENIR SCORE CARD.

WORLD'S SERIES  
GAMES

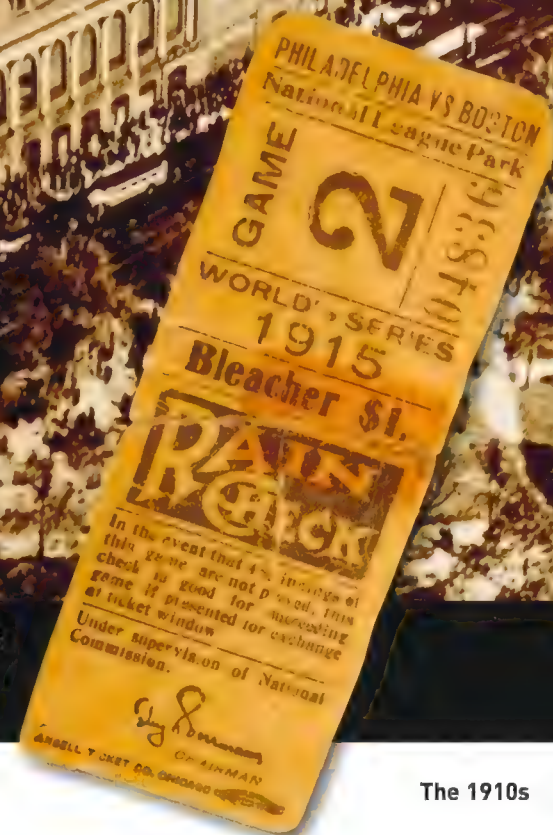
REDLAND FIELD  
1910



Price, 25 Cents

◆ A SCORECARD FROM THE 1919 WORLD SERIES, IN WHICH THE CINCINNATI REDS BEAT THE WHITE SOX. EIGHT CHICAGO PLAYERS WERE LATER ACCUSED OF THROWING THE SERIES TO GAMBLERS.

◆ PRESIDENT WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT AT OPENING DAY IN WASHINGTON, D.C., IN 1910, AS HE BEGINS A GRAND AMERICAN TRADITION — THE PRESIDENTIAL FIRST PITCH.



◆ ABOVE: WHEN IT WAS CONSTRUCTED, SHIBE PARK SAT FOUR MILES NORTH OF PHILADELPHIA'S INDEPENDENCE HALL AT THE CORNER OF LEHIGH AND FIFTH STREETS — SO FAR REMOVED FROM THE ACTION THAT FEW STREETCARS MADE THE TREK OUT. BUT ITS DISTINGUISHED APPEARANCE SOON MADE IT THE CENTER OF THE BASEBALL WORLD. RIGHT: A STUB FROM THE 1915 WORLD SERIES, WON BY THE BOSTON RED SOX (AND A 20-YEAR-OLD BABE RUTH) IN FIVE GAMES OVER THE PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES.



# COLLECTIBLES

As the game has grown older, MEMORABILIA has become a massive industry.

**T**HE STATUE THAT sits just outside the home plate entrance to the Pirates' PNC Park today features the legendary Honus Wagner with a bat in his hands. It's a fitting tribute because for 21 seasons, including 18 spent in Pittsburgh, Wagner was a magician with the lumber, winning eight batting titles between 1900 and 1911 and finishing with a career average of .327.

Today, though, Wagner — who was a member of the inaugural class of the Baseball Hall of Fame — might at least be as well known for his appearance on baseball cards (one of which sold for \$2.35 million early in 2007) as for any of his numerous offensive accomplishments.

The prized cards originally were produced as a part of the now-famous T-206 set — a 523-card series showing players in both the Minor and Major leagues, to be distributed in packs of cigarettes by the American Tobacco Company between 1909 and 1911.

The Wagner card is valuable mainly because it's so rare, although the reasons for its scarcity have long been debated.

An article published in *The Record* in Bergen County, N.J., in 1944 quoted one fan who claimed to have asked Wagner about the card as saying that Wagner "did not believe an athlete should use tobacco and for that reason turned down all offers made to him by the cigarette companies for the use of his picture." The claim fails on numerous levels, though. For starters, according to *Sports Collector's Digest*, Wagner's granddaughter, Leslie Blair, has said that Wagner himself was always chewing tobacco. He was not opposed to the product, at least not enough to stop from using it. Additionally, Wagner's likeness can be found on other tobacco products, such as a cigar box from 1900, to name one example. Apparently, he wasn't completely opposed to endorsing tobacco products.

Blair told *Sports Collector's Digest* that Wagner's objection was to selling tobacco to kids; that he hated the idea of youngsters having to buy tobacco just to get his card. Others recently have suggested that Wagner merely was holding out for money from the company. Whatever the true reason behind the protest, Wagner's refusal to participate in the T-206 series meant that only a few cards with his likeness were produced, and the value of the card in today's memorabilia-crazed society has skyrocketed.

Around the time of its production, though, few were too concerned about the resale value of such an item. Those years, between 1909 and 1915, often are described



◆ ABOVE AND CENTER: HONUS WAGNER AND FREDDIE LINDSTROM WERE ADEPT WITH THE LUMBER, BUT THEY MAY BE AS WELL KNOWN FOR APPEARING ON BASEBALL CARDS. UPPER RIGHT: BABE RUTH AUTOGRAPHS BOX AFTER BOX OF BASEBALLS. LOWER RIGHT: A ZACK WHEAT CARD FROM THE T-206 SET, WHICH WAS ISSUED IN 1911.

as the most romantic period of baseball card production, as numerous cigarette and candy companies put out their own well-designed series.

The practice of producing cards originated in the mid-1800s, when cigarette companies put photographs of actresses in packages with their product to increase sales. Photos of famous athletes mounted on cardboard stock, including baseball players, were soon to follow.

By 1895, the American Tobacco Company had such a stranglehold on the entire tobacco industry that the practice of card production was no longer necessary to boost sales, at least for a short stretch of time. The company revived the practice in the early years of the 20th Century and, excluding interruptions in card manufacturing for both World Wars, cards have been produced in one form or another ever since.



◆ A GLOVE SIGNED BY THE 1943 CARDINALS, WHO LOST IN THE WORLD SERIES. WITH TIME, INTEREST IN PLAYERS' AUTOGRAPHS HAS INCREASED.



◆ A BASEBALL CARD FROM THE LATE 19TH CENTURY DEPICTING BOB CARUTHERS — A STAR PITCHER FOR THE ST. LOUIS AND BROOKLYN CLUBS.



## ENCLOSURE

A replica of the Wagner T-206 card, one of which was sold in early 2007 for more than \$2 million. The card is valuable because it is so rare.

cards, that of Charles (Freddie) Lindstrom (who spent most of his 13-year career with the New York Giants), was extremely difficult to locate. According to *The Hartford Courant*, the rumor is that the company didn't want to give out the expensive prize and thus limited the production of one of the cards. Whatever the reason, the Lindstrom card, like the Wagner card, is extremely valuable due to its scarcity.

A major milestone in the card industry came in 1951, when the Topps Chewing Gum Company of Brooklyn got involved. In 1952, the company made the first-ever wax packs. And by 1956, Topps had bought out the major competition (Bowman) and would corner the market for the next few decades.

That changed in 1981, when a Supreme Court ruling opened the door for competition. Companies like Fleer and Donruss began producing cards of their own.

At the same time, James Beckett published the first national price guide. Suddenly, even the casual collector, who kept a stack of cards in the closet somewhere, was conscious of the money involved. That, coupled with a surging economy and a high point of interest in the national pastime, made for a baseball card explosion. Rare cards, like the Wagner T-206, sold for staggering figures.

The big dollars weren't limited to baseball cards, either. Memorabilia of all kinds — bats, uniforms and baseballs, for example — were all the rage. And if they were autographed, their value multiplied.

For much of the first few decades, the cards were used as a promotional tool.

The United States Caramel Company, for example, produced a set of 32 cards in 1932, promising any customer who could collect the whole bunch a free \$1 baseball. One card was put into each package of caramel. One of the

The idea of asking a famous ballplayer to write down his name was not new. According to author and former New York Yankees PR man Marty Appel, the first known instance of fans asking for an autograph occurred back in the 1880s, when Boston Beaneaters catcher Mike "King" Kelly was often mobbed for signatures by locals on his walk to the ballpark.

One hundred years later the practice continues, although the stakes have been raised considerably. Players today, happy to sign their name for innocent fans, often have a tough time weeding out the memorabilia dealers looking to make a profit. And the constant rush of people vying for

any signature can become a burden.

It also can become a source of supplemental income. Many players are paid well by memorabilia dealers for signing items in bulk or appearing at the ever-popular baseball card shows. At such events, fans don't seem to blink at

a \$35 fee for a few seconds and a signature from one of their baseball heroes.

With big money entering the baseball memorabilia world, the issue of autograph fraud arose, forcing companies to provide some sort of security for their customers. By 1995, the Upper Deck Company, according to the *Boston Globe*, had a rigid system for verifying each signature's authenticity, which included a notary witnessing each sweep of the pen by the famous ballplayer and the numbering of each item for the records.

A Los Angeles company took it one step further, actually putting a bit of the athlete's DNA in the ink used for the signature. The firm estimated it added about \$6 to the cost of the autograph, while the customer would have to pay about \$50 to have the item tested later. "It's virtually impossible to copy or duplicate that DNA," Nelson Hunt, the CEO of the company, told the *Globe*.

**"Hey!" proclaimed *The Record's* Don Basenfelder in 1944. "Don't throw out those cards in the attic, Mother. They're worth dough!"**



# THE 1920s

With the “BLACK SOX” SCANDAL threatening to ruin the game’s credibility, the owners turned to JUDGE KENESAW MOUNTAIN LANDIS.

**A**T THE TIME that the controversy of the 1919 World Series arose, baseball was run by a three-man commission comprised of the presidents of the National and American leagues and August Herrmann, the President of the Cincinnati Reds.

It was a tough arrangement, since each league’s leader always had to support the interests of his member teams, which left Herrmann to cast the deciding vote. Herrmann was in an impossible position, as his Reds played in the National League. When he voted with the NL, he was said to be acting unfairly by the American Leaguers. Yet when he felt it prudent to stray from the NL’s position, its members were upset.

But the scandal of the 1919 World Series — which came to a head toward the end of the 1920 season, when eight White Sox players were accused of deliberately throwing the World Series in a deal made with gamblers — put an end to all of that. The heavily-favored Sox had lost to Cincinnati in eight games, and fans and executives alike suspected that the fix was in.

As a result, the three-man commission was completely discredited as ineffective; to save the game’s public image, the owners advocated the hiring of an outside man who could restore order. The man for the job, they said, was Kenesaw Mountain Landis, a federal judge who became baseball’s first commissioner.

Born in Millville, Ohio, in 1866, Landis got his name from the Civil War’s Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, where his father, a surgeon in the Union Army, had nearly lost a leg. At the time Kenesaw was born, there were two ways to spell the name and his parents chose to use one ‘n.’

As a lawyer and then a judge, Landis had a reputation for honesty and integrity. Ed Fitzgerald once wrote about his commanding presence in an article on Landis in 1950, saying, “He made his courtroom a stage and there was never any question about who was playing the leading role.”

He also was a big baseball fan and attended games regularly. Landis had endeared himself to the game’s ownership with his work on a 1915 case involving the



◆ DURING THE 1920 FALL CLASSIC, BILL WAMBSGANSS TURNED IN A RARE FEAT — AN UNASSISTED TRIPLE PLAY.

Federal League’s accusation that the Major Leagues held a monopoly on the sport. He had refused wholeheartedly to damage baseball in any way, and he delayed his ruling long enough for the NL and the AL to work out a settlement with Federal League executives.

Now Landis was being asked to defend the game in the court of public opinion. To do this, he was given absolute power, an unprecedented step deemed imperative because of the situation’s severity.

In his first act as commissioner, Landis banned the eight implicated Chicago players for life. It was a

characteristically swift and forceful ruling that Landis hoped would be the first step toward restoring credibility.

As time passed, it turned out that his fearless leadership was just what the game needed. Although he often butted heads with owners and players who disagreed with his decisions, Landis always acted with his idea of the game’s best interest in mind. And his discipline was universal; anyone with ties to his league, from a utilityman to the most

powerful owner, was subject to his iron fist. Landis once suspended Babe Ruth two months for violating one of his rules. And in the early 1940s, Landis banned Phillies owner William D. Cox for life for betting on his own team.

In addition to the naming of the game’s first commissioner, a number of other baseball milestones took place during the 1920s.

The most tragic of those occurred in 1920, with Major League Baseball’s first death due to on-field injury. The victim was Ray Chapman, the fine-hitting Cleveland Indians shortstop, who was hit on the head by a pitch from New York submariner Carl Mays on Monday, August 16, and passed away at an area hospital at five o’clock the next morning.

His death devastated the baseball world and was the impetus behind baseball’s decision to use only fresh, white balls. It was believed that Chapman had trouble picking up the pitch out of Mays’ hand due to the dirt on the ball, and therefore was unable to get out of the way fast enough. (Around the same time, the league took a stand against doctored pitches, including the oft-used spitball, to encourage more offense.)

Then, in one game of the 1920 World Series, Chapman’s former teammates were part of a pair of milestones. The first came off the bat of Elmer Smith, the Cleveland cleanup hitter. In the first inning of Game 5, he stepped in



## Contrasting Styles

George Sisler (far left) and Rogers Hornsby (left) were two of the finest hitters of the 1920s, and both future Hall of Famers, but off of the field they were completely different. Sisler was an all-around star, having graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in mechanical engineering in 1915 before making the jump to the Big Leagues. Hornsby, who spent most of his 23-year career in the NL, had much more of a one-tracked mind. “Baseball is my life,” he once said, “the only thing I know and can talk about. It’s my only interest.” He antagonized his teammates and alienated his friends, instead devoting his time to perfecting his technique and philosophy of hitting.

Despite the different approaches, the results were similar. In 1920, Sisler rapped 257 hits, a single-season record that stood until Seattle outfielder Ichiro Suzuki tallied 262 in 2004. Four years after Sisler’s feat, Hornsby hit a career-best .424, his fifth straight year atop the league in batting.

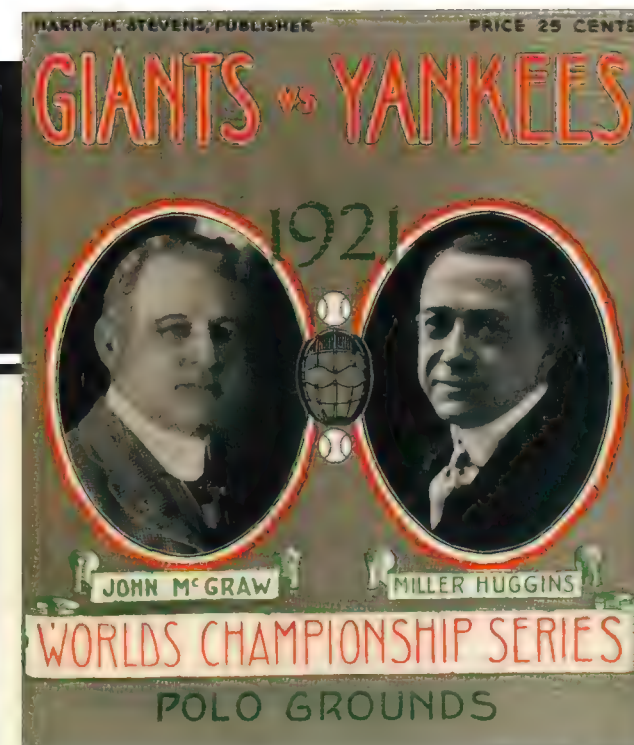


“Landis was the right man for baseball,” Richard S. Simons once wrote, “and many considered him the savior of the game.”

◆ THE COVER OF THE 1921 SERIES PROGRAM. THE GIANTS AND THE YANKEES BOTH CALLED THE POLO GROUNDS HOME AT THAT TIME.



◆ INSET: KENESAW MOUNTAIN LANDIS RESTORED THE GAME'S IMAGE FOLLOWING THE SCANDAL OF THE 1919 WORLD SERIES. CENTER: GROVER CLEVELAND ALEXANDER DOMINATED ON THE MOUND DURING A 20-YEAR CAREER. RIGHT: A TICKET STUB FROM THE 1929 SERIES, WON BY PHILADELPHIA OVER CHICAGO.



to face Brooklyn spitballer Burleigh Grimes (one of the few pitchers still allowed to throw the spitter) with the bases full of Indians. After whiffing on a pair of spitballs, Smith got a fastball and slapped it over the short right-field fence in Cleveland for the first-ever World Series grand slam.

Just a few innings later, Smith's teammate, second baseman Bill Wambsganss, turned in the first unassisted triple play in Series history. It came on a screaming line drive from Clarence Mitchell. With the runners on first and second running on the pitch, Wambsganss caught the drive and was able to touch nearby second base and tag out the runner from first. In just a few seconds, Wambsganss was a household name.

Grover Cleveland Alexander, a future Hall of Famer, already was an established figure in 1920, having won 30 games three times during the 1910s. For those who watched him pitch, it was said that Alexander, who debuted in 1911 and continued well into the 1920s, always seemed to wear a cap that was a size or two too small for his head. Yet there it would sit, tilted a bit to the side, as the red-haired Nebraska native flung fastballs and curves past the opposition with remarkable accuracy. In 1920, he was first in the National League in ERA (1.91) and wins (27). He would go on to win a World Series with the St. Louis Cardinals in 1926.





# BABE RUTH AND THE YANKEES

With the **SULTAN OF SWAT** on board, New York enjoyed more than a decade of dominance.

**F**EW ATHLETES HAVE left as big of an impression on American society as George Herman Ruth. In 22 seasons spent mostly with the Yankees (1920–34), Ruth captivated the nation with his breathtaking ability and lovable persona. To this day, he's simply revered as "the Babe" — the greatest ballplayer who ever lived.

"I swing big, with everything I've got," he once said, according to *USA Today Baseball Weekly*. "I hit big or miss big. I like to live as big as I can." And at a time when the Black Sox scandal was making headlines across America and the nation was recovering from the Great War, baseball fans ate it up.

He developed his personality in the blue-collar, waterfront neighborhood of Baltimore, where he was born in 1895. Ruth's father, "Big George," owned a saloon, working long hours to make a living, and Little George fell in with a tough crowd. "I was a bum when I was a kid," Ruth said in his autobiography, co-written by Bob Considine. "The truckdrivers, cops and storekeepers were our enemies."

His talent on the baseball diamond was evident from the very beginning, though. And after receiving close guidance at St. Mary's, a reform school, to temper some of his youthful behavior, Ruth was invited to Spring Training by the Orioles of the International League in February 1914. Although he wowed with both his arm and his bat in North Carolina, he soon broke into the Major Leagues as a hurler for the Boston Red Sox.

By now, it's common knowledge that Ruth, the Sultan of Swat who shattered the home run records of his day, was a Major League pitcher before he was a position player. Few realize, however, just how good a pitcher Ruth was. He had a career ERA of 2.28, and in 1916 he won 23 games as a starter and posted a 1.75 ERA for Boston.

By the 1920s, as a member of the New York Yankees, Ruth was settled in the outfield and, most importantly, in the everyday lineup. He would become the first player in Big League history to hit 30 home runs in a season. Then



◆ THE PLAQUE AT THE HALL OF FAME HONORING THE GREAT NEW YORK YANKEES SLUGGER, WHO WAS IN ATTENDANCE WHEN THE HALL OPENED IN 1939.

the first to 40, 50 and 60. Prior to his arrival in New York, the club longball record for a season was 12. In 1920, his first as a Yankee, Ruth rapped 54. The 714th and final homer of his career came on May 25, 1935, as a member of the Boston Braves, and was the first hit completely out of Forbes Field.

With that type of power in the lineup, the Yankees went on a tear. They won four pennants and a World Series title from 1920–26 and in 1927, led by Ruth and Lou Gehrig, they won 110 games and the Fall Classic.

Ruth's last World Series came in 1932 against the Chicago Cubs. Although it wasn't his finest statistical performance in a Series (that would be 1923, '26 or '28), it would add the most to his legendary status.

Did he or didn't he? The debate still goes on today, but only the Sultan of Swat knew for sure whether he had called his own homer in the fifth inning of Game 3 at Wrigley Field, as the media reported he did.

When Ruth stepped to the plate for the much-discussed at-bat, he drew a raucous chorus of boos from the Chicago crowd, which he acknowledged with a tip of the cap. The bad blood between Ruth and Chicago had been brewing, largely due to the Cubs' vote to give shortstop Mark Koenig, Ruth's teammate in New York from 1925–30, only a half-share of the team's World Series money.

As the Babe fell behind 0-2 against hurler Charlie Root, the Chicago players laughed from the dugout. And according to some witnesses, that's why Ruth raised up a finger — to indicate to everyone watching that he still had one more strike — before hitting the next pitch out of the park.

The legend soon grew, though, that the great slugger actually was pointing to where his blast was about to end up.

According to Frank Crosetti, the New York shortstop in 1932, it simply wasn't true. "Babe did not point his finger to center field," Crosetti asserted in February 2002, at age 91. "He raised his right arm and shook his index finger in front of his face, meaning he had one more strike. [Later,] I'm sitting next to him in the dugout and he said,

'If the writers all want to say I pointed to center field, let 'em. I don't care.'"

Ruth's own statements over time were inconclusive. At one point, he shot down the notion as absurd. At another time, he told writer John P. Carmichael, "I just sorta waved at the whole fence." The mystery only added to his aura.

Off the field, the Babe wasn't shy about his nights on the town. Lawrence Ritter, author of *East Side, West Side: Tales of New York Sporting Life*, writes that Ruth treated every night as "a celebration of wine, women and song." He says that a reporter once asked Ruth's roommate on the road, outfielder Ping Bodie, about living with the Sultan of Swat. "I have no idea," Bodie said.

"What do you mean?" the reporter replied. "I thought you room with him."

"No," said Bodie. "I room with Babe Ruth's suitcase." The Babe, it seems, was always living big.

## ENCLOSURES

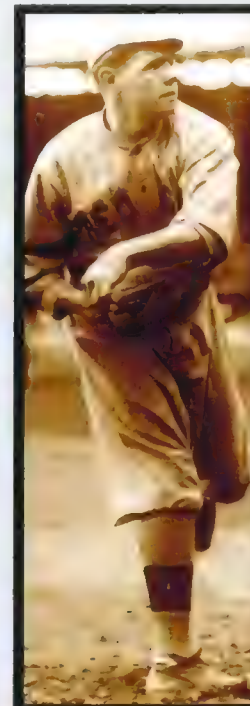
A 1930 letter offering advice to young fans, written by Babe Ruth. A promissory note from New York to Boston, as part of the Ruth deal. An autographed photo.

## The Curse of the Bambino

When the Boston Red Sox took the field for the 2004 World Series, many believed that more than just the Cardinals stood between them and baseball's greatest prize. The Curse of the Bambino, which supposedly had haunted them for decades, also was lingering.

Legend had it that Boston's beloved Sox were still reeling from a move they made on January 3, 1920, when their cash-strapped owner, Harry Frazee, sold Babe Ruth (left) to the Yankees for \$100,000 and a \$300,000 loan.

But if a curse had weighed on the team's success, it was lifted in 2004. The Sox swept St. Louis for their first title since 1918.







◆ A SCORECARD FROM THE 1932 WORLD SERIES, IN WHICH BABE RUTH IS SAID TO HAVE CALLED A HOME RUN AT THE CUBS' LEGENDARY WRIGLEY FIELD.

“Gosh that was a great feeling,” Babe Ruth once told John P. Carmichael of his shot in the 1932 Series. “And I knew it was going someplace.”



◆ ABOVE: BABE RUTH (RIGHT) ALONGSIDE HIS TEAMMATE AND FELLOW HALL OF FAMER, LOU GEHRIG. IN 1927, THEY WERE THE STARS OF ONE OF THE BEST HITTING TEAMS IN HISTORY. BELOW: A PAINTING DEPICTING RUTH'S "CALLED SHOT" IN 1932 IN CHICAGO.



◆ ABOVE: BABE RUTH NEVER SHIED AWAY FROM A PHOTO OPPORTUNITY AND SIGNED THOUSANDS OF AUTOGRAPHS. HE EVEN MADE CAMEOS IN SEVERAL MOVIES. RIGHT: A GLOVE WORN BY RUTH IN THE 1926 WORLD SERIES, IN WHICH HE HIT FOUR HOME RUNS IN A LOSING EFFORT.





# THE 1930s

With a wealth of **BIG LEAGUE TALENT** and a roster of pranksters, the 1934 Cardinals were one of the **MOST INTERESTING TEAMS** ever assembled.



◆ ABOVE: LOU GEHRIG WAS FORCED INTO EARLY RETIREMENT DUE TO ILLNESS; HIS CONSECUTIVE GAMES STREAK STOOD UNTIL CAL RIPKEN PASSED HIM IN 1995.



**T**HE MANAGER OF the raucous, fun-loving, brash and talented 1934 St. Louis Cardinals, known to many as the Gas House Gang, also was their second baseman, Frankie Frisch, who took over as skipper from Gabby Street in '33. Frisch was hot-tempered and a fierce competitor, but he was no more off-color than any of his players.

The ringleader was Dizzy Dean, who along with his quieter brother, Paul, formed a frightful pitching duo at the front of the rotation. They won a combined 49 games in '34 and four against the Tigers in the World Series.

In Game 7 of that showdown, with the Cards up, 11-0, in the ninth inning, Frisch had to go to the mound to quell the laughter of the legendary Dizzy. Having pushed two fastballs by a seemingly overmatched Hank Greenberg, Dean was laughing hysterically into his glove — partly as a result of ill feelings between the teams. As Dizzy later recalled: "Frisch comes out to the mound and says, 'Cut that foolin'. We got a lot at stake here!' He was mad. I just looked at him like he was outta his mind."

Frisch felt a similar frustration a few seasons later when Dizzy made a 50-cent bet with a friend that in an upcoming game he could strike out the Braves' Vince DiMaggio every time DiMaggio came up to the plate.

Dizzy seemed in a good position to win the wager, too, after the Brave whiffed his first three times up. But in his fourth appearance, with two outs in the ninth inning,

the Boston outfielder popped one up foul behind home plate for what seemed to be the final out of the ballgame. Dean called from the mound for his catcher to "Drop it!" and the teams played on, with Dean soon hurling a final, bet-winning pitch past DiMaggio.

As if managing Dean wasn't enough of a challenge for Frisch, there also was the fun-loving "Rip" Collins. The diminutive first baseman and product of the Altoona, Pa., coal mines, Collins won the National League home run title with 35 blasts in 1934. He once instigated a prank in which he and his fellow Gas Housers dressed up in painters' gear, invaded the cocktail lounge of a swank Philadelphia hotel and began splashing paint all over the place in front of the startled, well-heeled guests.

There also was the combative future Hall of Fame slugger Joe Medwick, who had to be removed from left field in the sixth inning of that same seventh game in '34, as irate Tigers fans bombarded him with debris. With the Cards comfortably ahead, 8-0, Medwick had taken out third baseman Marv Owen with a hard slide in the sixth inning and the two had come up wrestling. When Medwick made his way to the outfield following the incident, the Detroit fans showed their frustration. To avoid any further ugliness, Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis, who was in attendance, ordered Medwick out of the game.

Yet amidst all of the mayhem, the Cardinals managed to win 95 games in 1934 and a World Series. Seven members of the team — including Frisch, Medwick and Dean — would all, one day, be enshrined in the Hall of Fame. It was a short run in St. Louis, though. The following season, the gang exceeded its win total from the previous year by one game, but fell four

## ENCLOSURES

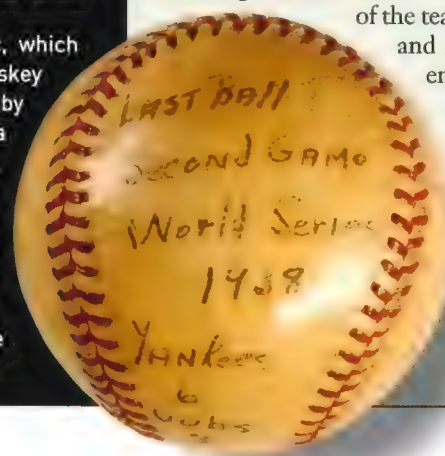
*Lou Gehrig's letter to his wife is thought to have been written May 3, 1939, a day after he asked to be taken out of the lineup. Also, a scorecard from the Hall of Fame's 1939 event.*

## Shining Stars

During the 1930s, the sport inaugurated two new venues to celebrate its biggest names: the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., and the All-Star Game.

First to debut was the Midsummer Classic, which premiered on July 6, 1933, at Chicago's Comiskey Park as a part of the World's Fair. Babe Ruth, by then an aging veteran, was the hero, belting a two-run homer and making a great catch in right.

Six years later, Ruth was in attendance as the Hall of Fame was dedicated. Many of the legends on hand posed for a photo (left), including Honus Wagner, Grover Cleveland Alexander, Tris Speaker, Nap Lajoie, George Sisler and Walter Johnson (back row, from the left) and Eddie Collins, Ruth, Connie Mack and Cy Young (front).



◆ A BALL FROM GAME 2 OF THE 1938 WORLD SERIES. THE YANKEES WON BOTH THE GAME AND THE SERIES.



◆ A SOUVENIR BAT FROM THE 1932 WORLD SERIES IN WHICH BABE RUTH AND THE YANKEES SWEEPED THE CHICAGO CUBS FOR THE CROWN. LOU GEHRIG HIT .529 WITH THREE HOME RUNS FOR NEW YORK IN THE SERIES.

WORLD SERIES  
CUBS vs YANKEES  
1932

**“X-rays to my head revealed nothin’,”**  
Dizzy Dean proudly proclaimed  
after being hit by an errant throw  
during the 1934 World Series.

games short in the NL pennant race to the Chicago Cubs, who won 100. Although Frisch remained at the helm of the club until 1938, many of the others had left St. Louis before then. The Cardinals didn't return to the Fall Classic until 1942, led by an entirely different cast of characters.

A few years after the success of the Gas Housers, baseball faced one of its most solemn moments: the retirement of Lou Gehrig due to illness. Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, which destroys the motor neurons carrying impulses from the brain to the spinal cord and muscles, was the fatal condition. It would come to be called Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Hitting behind Babe Ruth, Gehrig often had been overshadowed early in his career. But by his retirement, he had established himself as one of the greatest Yankees ever.

Most notable was his ability to play every day. His famed consecutive games played streak (2,130 games) stood as a record until 1995, when Cal Ripken passed him.

Off the field, Gehrig was devoted to his wife, Eleanor. He had an alluring smile and an athletic frame. Toward the end, his courage in the face of his body's betrayal was remarkable. As his health deteriorated, and he was unable to play the game he so loved, Gehrig was forced to take himself out of the lineup. Yet in an on-field ceremony in his honor on July 4, 1939, at Yankee Stadium, the Iron Horse told fans: "For the past two weeks, you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of this earth."

◆ FAR RIGHT: THE DEAN BROTHERS, DIZZY (LEFT) AND PAUL, WHO STARRED FOR THE CARDINALS. RIGHT: A STUB FROM A 1930 WORLD SERIES CONTEST IN PHILADELPHIA.





# THE 1940s

Two **BASEBALL LEGENDS** delivered a season to remember, as a **GLOBAL CONFLICT** loomed large on the horizon.



◆ NEW YORK'S JOE DIMAGGIO (LEFT) AND BOSTON'S TED WILLIAMS SHARED THE NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT DURING A MEMORABLE, RECORD-SETTING 1941 SEASON.

**A**LTHOUGH WORLD WAR II raged on numerous parts of the globe in the summer of 1941, the United States remained relatively unaffected. For a time, baseball carried on unimpeded in parks across the land, and two of the game's young hitters captivated the nation with breathtaking accomplishments.

Ted Williams, a 6-foot-3 outfielder for the Boston Red Sox who had made his Major League debut just two seasons before, would hit better than .400 on the year — .406 to be exact, a full 47 points higher than the next closest batter.

It wasn't too surprising since Williams truly was a student of hitting. "Hitting is the biggest thing in my life," he once told writer Carl Felker. "I love it." Everywhere he went he practiced his swing, whether it was in front of a mirror in his hotel room or in the outfield during warm-ups when he was supposed to be working on his fielding. And that repetition helped him remain impressively consistent throughout the 1941 campaign.

Entering the final day of the year, with the Red Sox scheduled for a doubleheader against the Philadelphia Athletics, Williams' average stood at .39955. When rounded off, it would be .400 on the nose. Rather than risk a few points, Boston Manager Joe Cronin offered to let Williams sit the day out. The Splendid Splinter would have none of it. "I'm going to play the string out," Williams said, according to the *Record American*. "Nobody is ever going to be able to say I played it safe."

He went 6 for 8 in the two games, hitting his then career-best 37th homer, and finished six points past the .400 clip.

Despite his accomplishment, Williams' eight first-place votes for the AL MVP Award in 1941 put him second behind the Yankees' young outfielder, Joe DiMaggio. It was remarkable, considering what Williams had done, but certainly a testament to DiMaggio's great season, which included a league-record 56-game hitting streak.

From May 15 to July 16, 1941, DiMaggio got a hit in every game in which he played. It started innocently enough for the 26-year-old with a 1 for 4 against the Chicago White Sox. But over the course of the next two

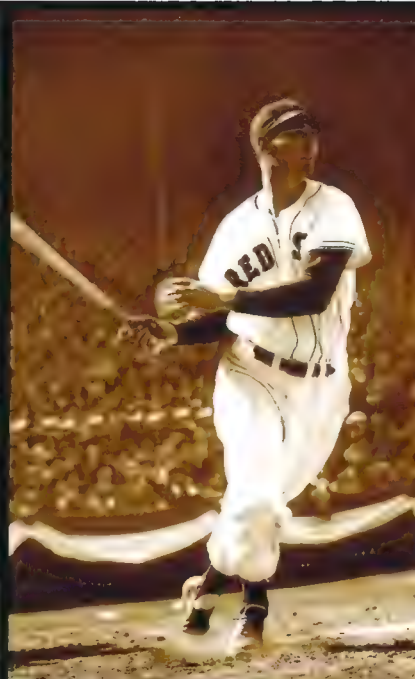
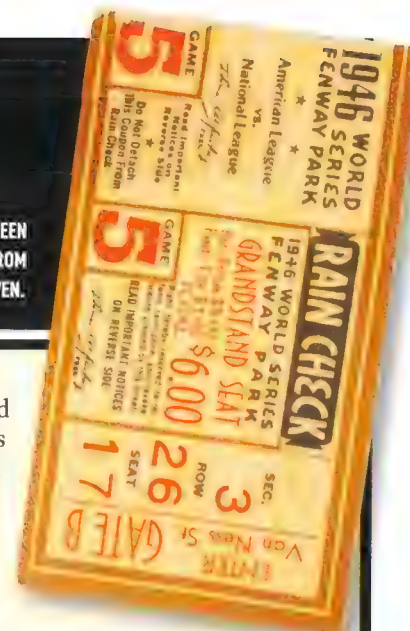
## ENCLOSURES

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's letter to Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis, asking that baseball go on during the war. An entry in Ty Cobb's diary, as he was named the best player of the half-century.



“People don’t know it,” Phil Rizzuto once told *Newsday*, “but Joe was a student of hitting. He talked about it as much as Williams.”

◆ A TICKET STUB FROM THE 1946 WORLD SERIES BETWEEN ST. LOUIS AND BOSTON. LED BY THREE WINS FROM STARTER HARRY BRECHEN, THE CARDS WON IT IN SEVEN.



◆ LEFT: JOE DIMAGGIO (LEFT) AND PEE WEE REESE (RIGHT), SHOWN IN MILITARY BASEBALL UNIFORMS, BOTH SERVED IN WORLD WAR II. ABOVE: TED WILLIAMS TAKES A WELL-PRACTICED SWING.

months, DiMaggio captivated baseball fans, especially his fellow Italian Americans, with his own consistency and grace under pressure. “I followed the DiMaggio streak like a religion,” Hall of Fame Manager Tommy Lasorda, who was 13 at the time of the feat, told the *Los Angeles Times*. “Do you realize what that meant to a poor Italian kid sleeping on the third floor of a flat where heat from the wood stove went up only to the second floor?” Thanks to DiMaggio and Williams, kids like Lasorda had a great distraction from the fighting abroad.

The war erupted at home following the 1941 season, though. As a result of the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the U.S. entered World War II.

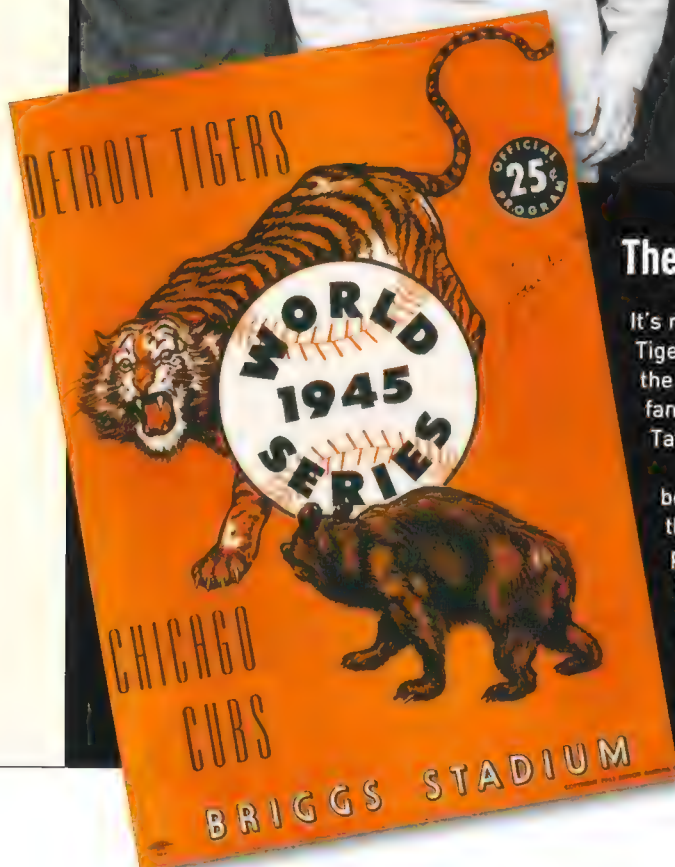
Intense patriotism swelled throughout the nation, and baseball was by no means immune. Such stars as Bob Feller, Williams and DiMaggio all signed up to join the fight. “Those four years,” said the former Cleveland pitcher, Feller, who fought at Iwo Jima and commanded a 24-man anti-aircraft crew aboard the USS Alabama with the Third Fleet, “were more important than playing baseball.”

Williams, who also won the Triple Crown in the American League in '42, spent three years during World War II learning to fly. Although he wasn't called up to the front then, Williams was mobilized in the Korean War a few years later. There, he performed admirably, adding the term “war hero” to an already remarkable resume.

Back home in the mid-1940s, the game went on at the behest of President Franklin Roosevelt, who sent a letter to the commissioner, Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, suggesting that the game offered an invaluable diversion for the millions of people dedicated to the war effort.

With many of the sport's best away, errors were up and home runs were down. Players that never would have made the league in peacetime were now suiting up. Many observers poked fun at the quality of play on the field. In describing the 1945 World Series, sportswriter Frank Graham wrote that it looked like “the fat men against the tall men at the office picnic.”

But few could argue that both at home and abroad, baseball was making an important contribution to the nation at a time of great need.



## The Billy Goat Hex

It's not a coincidence that the Chicago Cubs, up 2 games to 1 over the Tigers in the 1945 Series (program cover to the left), lost Game 4, then the series, and haven't won much since. At least not according to Cubs fan William Sianis, a Greek immigrant and owner of the Billy Goat Tavern, who attempted to attend Game 4 with his billy goat, Murphy.

Murphy was not allowed to stay in the stands even though Sianis had bought a ticket for his pet. As Chicago owner Philip Wrigley put it at the time, “the goat smells.” When an angry Sianis finally left the park, he supposedly put a hex on the franchise, cursing them to a futile existence without another World Series crown.

Murphy died shortly thereafter and Sianis passed away in 1972, three years after he allegedly had attempted to lift the hex from the Cubs. But that same year, 1969, the Cubs surrendered a nine-game lead to the Mets, the eventual champions, in the pennant race and the Billy Goat Hex apparently lived on.



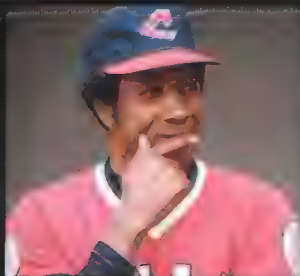
# BREAKING BARRIERS

Thanks to the **COURAGE OF A FEW**, the Big Leagues finally were **OPENED TO ALL**.



◆ THE INFIELD OF THE 1947 BROOKLYN DODGERS. FROM THE LEFT: SPIDER JORGENSEN, PEE WEE REESE, EDDIE STANKY AND JACKIE ROBINSON, WHO WAS A 28-YEAR-OLD ROOKIE AT THE TIME. THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN IN THE MAJORS, HE WOULD HIT .297 THAT YEAR.





◆ LEFT: FRANK ROBINSON, ALREADY A LEGENDARY PLAYER, BECAME THE GAME'S FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN MANAGER WHEN HE TOOK OVER AS SKIPPER OF THE INDIANS IN 1975. RIGHT: ARTURO MORENO BOUGHT THE ANGELS IN 2003 TO BECOME THE GAME'S FIRST HISPANIC OWNER. HIS TEAM WON THE AMERICAN LEAGUE WEST IN 2004 AND '05.



◆ THE 1953 TOPPS CARDS OF SATCHEL PAIGE AND JACKIE ROBINSON, WHO WERE BY THAT TIME ESTABLISHED MAJOR LEAGUE VETERANS.

**B**EFORE JACKIE ROBINSON integrated baseball in 1947, the game, like the nation itself, was segregated by skin color. Legendary talents like Josh Gibson, Satchel Paige and Cool Papa Bell were kept out of Major League uniforms. They had their own All-Star Game and World Series in the Negro Leagues, and were left to wonder what life would be like in the Majors.

Slowly but surely, though, a few brave souls helped change all that. Here are some of the game's pioneers; the courageous few who helped make the game what it is today.

**Jackie Robinson and Branch Rickey:** Segregation was still a way of life in 1947; schools remained separated according to race, blacks could not vote in many parts of the country and the apex of the Civil Rights movement was still years away. But that year, Robinson took on society when he became the first African American in the Major Leagues.

Rickey, the Brooklyn Dodgers' general manager, hand-picked Robinson to be the first, partly because of his incredible baseball skills, and partly due to his inner strength and discipline, traits that Rickey attributed to

Robinson's time in the military. Rickey counseled Robinson on remaining strong but silent when confronted with the bigotry he would surely face. On the outside, Robinson kept up his end of the bargain, turning the other way when catchers spit on his shoes or fans taunted him with racist remarks.

His skills were apparent from day one, as he won the Rookie of the Year Award and took the team to the World Series. They were on display again in 1949 when Robinson won the MVP Award. But it was his tremendous courage in the face of prejudice that remains his most lasting achievement.

**Larry Doby:** Just 11 weeks after Robinson broke through in the NL, Doby became the first African-American player to take the field in the American League. When he was introduced to his Indians teammates in the locker room on July 5, 1947, many of them refused even to shake his hand, according to some reports. But with the support of his wife, Helyn, and club owner Bill Veeck, Doby showed remarkable strength, finishing his career with a .283 average and 253 home runs in 13 seasons.

**Satchel Paige:** Midway through the 1948 season, just a year after introducing Doby to the AL, Veeck signed Paige to boost his pitching staff. The former Negro Leagues star, who would have been baffling hitters from a Big League mound years before but for segregation, was about 42 years old (his exact age was a matter of debate) and had played more than 20 years of semipro or Negro League baseball. He already was well established as a legendary pitcher with a wicked fastball. The first African-American pitcher in the AL, he went on to throw six seasons in the Bigs, primarily as a reliever.

**Frank Robinson:** Robinson, a Hall of Fame player and the first black manager in the Major Leagues, inherited a tall task when he took over his first managerial post as Indians skipper in 1975. Cleveland was six years removed from its last winning campaign and its most recent pennant had come in 1954. Robinson also had endless land mines to sidestep throughout the '75 season, including how to use himself in the lineup given that he was a player/manager.



There also were the unwarranted whispers of outsiders, who speculated about how race might impact his personnel decisions. That he guided the team to a 79-80 finish, its best in years, was a testament to Robinson's ability to get the best out of his players. He demanded, and almost always got, all-out effort from everyone — something Robinson himself never failed to deliver during his 21-year playing career.

**Arturo Moreno:** Latino ballplayers long have had a role in the professional game. The first was Cuban pitcher Esteban Bellan, who played for the Troy Haymakers of the National Baseball Association in the 1870s. In 1914, light-skinned Cuban Adolfo Luque began his impressive career with the Boston Braves. He would go on to play 20 years, a career which included a pair of World Series rings.

Today, Latino players comprise a large percentage of Big League rosters. And since 2003, one has occupied the owner's box, as well. Moreno, a fourth-generation Mexican American, paid \$183.5 million in 2003 for a controlling stake in the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, becoming the game's first Hispanic owner, as well as the first minority owner to hold primary ownership of any team.

## ENCLOSURES

Jackie Robinson gave the New York Giants notice of his retirement in the attached letter. A ticket stub from the Negro Leagues All-Star Game. Also, a poster made to advertise a Negro Leagues game.

## Minor Pioneer

Rickey [right], who helped break baseball's color barrier by bringing Jackie Robinson to the Brooklyn Dodgers, revolutionized the game in a number of other ways, as well.

Given control of the St. Louis Cardinals in the late 1910s, Rickey saw that the club had few world-class players on its roster and even fewer dollars with which to acquire more. So Rickey took the unprecedented step of developing his own talent through the Majors' first-ever farm system. He bought clubs in Fort Smith, Ark., and Syracuse, N.Y., to start out and worked his way up to dozens of teams across the map. At one point, there were nearly 400 players in the St. Louis organization.

Big League results soon followed, as the Cards, using the game's first batch of homegrown talent, took the NL pennant in 1926 — their first. They would total six World Series and nine pennants over the next 20 years.





# CATCHERS

Although he **WASN'T ALLOWED** to play in the Majors, Josh Gibson was one of the **BEST HITTING CATCHERS** of all time.

**E**VERYONE WHO PLAYED with him or against him has a story. Remember when Josh Gibson knocked one clear out of Yankee Stadium? Or out of the Polo Grounds? Or Griffith Stadium? Remember when his massive forearms exploded through the zone? That short, level stroke launching a frozen rope that never rose more than 15 feet off the ground?

Gibson, a Hall of Fame catcher in the Negro Leagues from 1930–46, seems to have left an impression wherever he took the field. “About two years ago I played against Josh Gibson in Cincinnati,” Hall of Famer Leo Durocher recalled in a 1939 interview with Wendell Smith of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, “and found out that everything they say about him is true, and then some. Gibson can sure pound on a ball and if a pitcher grooves one, he’ll knock the cover off.”

A unique talent, Gibson balanced his power with the ability to hit for average while rarely striking out. Yet despite posting gargantuan numbers in every league he played in — like his nine Negro League home run crowns or his record .480 batting average for Santurce of the Puerto Rican winter league in 1941–42 — Gibson never was able to suit up in the Majors, due to the segregation of the day. Which begs the question, just where does he fit in amongst the best hitting catchers of all-time? Surely, he has to rank right near the top.

For one thing, Gibson owned Major League pitching in all of the exhibition games he played against Big League teams. Facing high-quality hurlers like Dizzy Dean, Paul Dean, Fred Frankhouse, Larry French and Johnny Vander Meer, Gibson hit .424 (28 for 66) in 16 games. But that wasn’t a huge shock, given that he hit wherever he went.

The son of sharecroppers Mark and Nancy Gibson, Josh first was asked to play in the Negro Leagues on a whim in 1930. Gibson, who at the time played for the Pittsburgh Crawfords in a semipro league, was watching a Homestead Grays game from the stands when regular

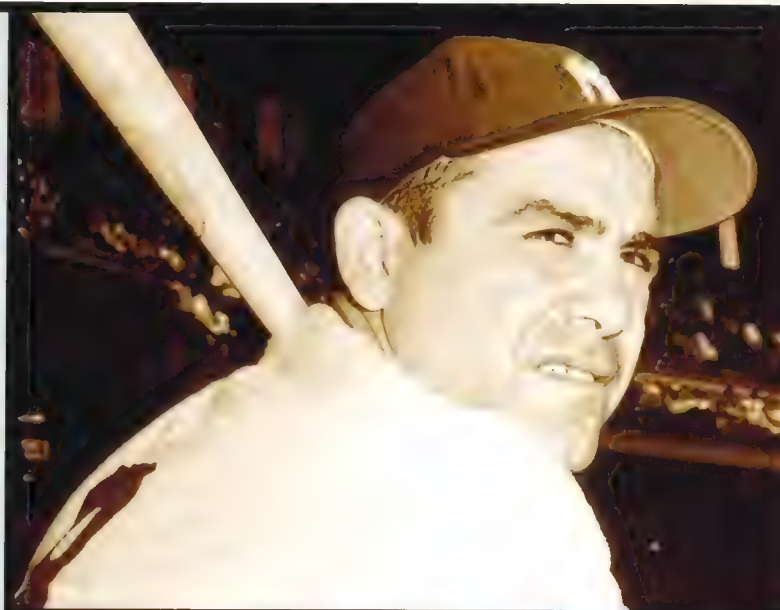
catcher Buck Ewing went down with an injury. Local fans knew of Gibson’s ability and begged him to step in behind the dish, which he did admirably, leaving a lasting impression on both the Grays and the visiting Kansas City Monarchs. He hung on as a catcher with the Grays for two seasons in the Negro Leagues before changing teams, and a star was born.

Gibson would go on to win Negro League home run crowns on a nearly annual basis, despite spending most of his time in two of the most spacious ballparks in the land — Forbes Field in Pittsburgh and Griffith Stadium in Washington.

Gibson also tore up the Latin American circuits. He led the Mexican League in home runs (33) and RBI (124) in 1941. Then, he moved over to the Puerto Rican winter league for the 1941–42 season and was named the most valuable player, having put up the aforementioned record average — a high enough number that Major League greats like Roberto Clemente, Tony Oliva, Willie Mays and Orlando Cepeda were unable to match it during their time on the island.

Would Gibson have posted numbers that high in the Major Leagues? Almost certainly not. While the superstars in the Negro Leagues and on the Latin American circuits were on par with those in the Bigs, the depth of the rosters was not nearly the same. And had Gibson been forced to grind out a 162-game season against Major League pitching talent, his offensive output surely would have dropped off some. But Gibson’s ability still would have made him one of the, if not *the*, best hitting catchers in Major League history.

“If Gibson had played in the Big Leagues in his prime,” declared Hall of Famer Judy Johnson, “Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron would still be chasing him for the home run record.”

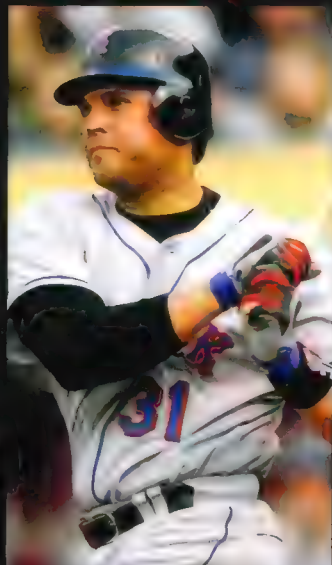


◆ LEFT: CARLTON FISK'S MASK FROM AUGUST 19, 1988, WHEN HE SET THE RECORD FOR GAMES PLAYED IN THE AL BY A CATCHER (1,807). TOP: YOGI BERRA, THE YANKEES' STAR BACKSTOP. ABOVE: THE REDS' JOHNNY BENCH.



◆ SHIN GUARDS WORN BY ROY CAMPANELLA, A THREE-TIME MVP WHO WAS A STELLAR DEFENSIVE CATCHER.

“Only catchers know the pressure of producing offense,” Carlton Fisk told *The New York Times*. “Mike Piazza has been meeting that challenge.”



◆ LEFT: JOSH GIBSON NEVER PLAYED IN THE BIG LEAGUES, BUT HIS BAT IS STILL LEGENDARY. TOP: CARLTON FISK ONCE HELD THE RECORD FOR HOMERS BY A CATCHER. ABOVE: AS A MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK METS, MIKE PIAZZA SURGED AHEAD OF FISK IN 2004.

Sadly, no one will ever know. Gibson was diagnosed with a brain tumor in early 1943 and passed away from a stroke just four years later, at age 35, only a few months before the Major Leagues were integrated.

If Gibson is indeed among the greatest, then which backstops are worthy of consideration alongside him?

Hall of Famer Roy Campanella certainly belongs on the list. He won three MVP Awards for the Brooklyn Dodgers in the early 1950s. Campanella set records for a catcher in 1953 with 41 homers and 142 RBI. His great career was cut short by a tragic car accident prior to the 1958 season, which left him paralyzed.

Playing across town for the Yankees, Yogi Berra also won three MVP Awards in the 1950s. His best year as a hitter, though, actually may have come in 1950, when he finished third in the voting behind Billy Goodman and his teammate, Phil Rizzuto. That year, Berra hit .322 with 28 home runs and 124 runs batted in.

Cincinnati Reds backstop Johnny Bench also deserves mention. He was a defensive stalwart behind the plate, having won 10 Gold Gloves, but he could hit, too, belting out 389 homers. He won a pair of MVP Awards himself.

Carlton “Pudge” Fisk, a contemporary of Bench’s, hit 351 of his 376 longballs as a catcher, a record that stood until Mike Piazza broke it in 2004.

Then there’s Ivan Rodriguez, the modern-day “Pudge,” who also is best known for his defensive prowess, having captured his 12th Gold Glove in 2006. But the 1999 AL MVP deserves serious mention as an offensive backstop, as well. A career .304 batter entering 2007, Rodriguez is a line-drive hitter with more than 470 doubles and 275 home runs to his credit. Having led the Marlins to a World Series crown in 2003, Rodriguez moved north to Detroit as a free agent the following year — a decision that many feel was the key to the franchise’s move from historically bad in 2003 to the AL pennant in 2006.

And then there’s Piazza. Taken in the 62nd round of the 1988 Draft, the future Hall of Famer has exceeded expectations with his lethal power at the plate. In the process, he raised the offensive bar for all Big League catchers.

Would Piazza still be chasing Gibson’s home run mark had the Negro Leagues star been allowed to play in the Major Leagues? No one will ever know for sure, but that shouldn’t preclude Gibson from the discussion of the best hitting backstops of all time.



# THE 1950s

With one **CLUTCH AT-BAT** and one **PERFECT OUTING**, outfielder Bobby Thomson and pitcher Don Larsen **MADE HISTORY**.

**A**FTER IT WAS all over, when the New York Giants' Bobby Thomson had rounded third and slammed down on home plate, his teammates lifted the outfielder up on their shoulders and carried him to the clubhouse beyond the outfield wall. There were cases of champagne to be emptied. Thanks to Thomson's "Shot Heard 'round the World," as it would come to be known, the Giants were headed for the 1951 World Series.

Just minutes prior, it would have seemed crazy to predict such a result. In the third game of the best-of-three National League playoff, the Giants trailed the Dodgers, 4-1, entering the ninth inning.

But singles by Alvin Dark and Don Mueller to lead off the ninth against Brooklyn hurler Don Newcombe kept New York's weak pulse beating. After Monte Irvin popped out, 25-year-old first baseman Whitey Lockman doubled to left to score Dark and cut the lead to 4-2.

With Thomson due up, Dodgers Manager Charlie Dressen pulled Newcombe in favor of righty Ralph Branca. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Dressen would have gone to Clem Labine, who also was warming up and had handled Thomson easily the day before, but Dodgers pitching coach Clyde Sukeforth told the manager that Labine was bouncing curveballs in the bullpen and that Branca was looking sharp.

Rookie Willie Mays stood on deck, and with first base open, some have since argued that Dressen should have walked Thomson. He did not, though, and Thomson deposited the second pitch he saw over the left-field wall for a shocking home run and a Giants victory.

In truth, the Giants, who would eventually fall to the New York Yankees in the World Series, never even should have been in that playoff. They had trailed the Dodgers by 13.5 games in August. But a 37-7 run to end the season pulled the team dead even with its crosstown rivals.



◆ A PLATE MADE TO HONOR DON LARSEN'S HISTORIC PERFORMANCE IN GAME 5 OF THE 1956 WORLD SERIES.

nothing to be proud of," he said. "Of course, the question is, did I take them?"

Five years after Thomson's blast, the game witnessed another cherished late-season feat. But if it wasn't for one fortunate bounce in the second inning, Don Larsen may never have had his moment in the sun. It was the second inning of Game 5 of the 1956 World Series, with Larsen's Yankees squaring off against the Brooklyn Dodgers (a series New York would win in seven). Jackie Robinson stepped in to face Larsen and smashed a liner toward third, seemingly a sure hit. But the ball deflected off of third baseman Andy Carey to shortstop Gil McDougald, who threw to first base for the out.

No one in the stands could have imagined at the time how close that smash had come to reshaping the record books, for

Most people had no way of knowing it at the time, yet some now believe the Giants were getting a bit of help during their run. According to an article published in *The Wall Street Journal* in 2001, New York stole signs from the opposing catchers throughout the final 10 weeks. "Every hitter knew what was coming," pitcher Al Gettel told *The Wall Street Journal*. "Made a big difference." The process for relaying the next pitch to the current hitter was elaborate, allegedly involving an electrician and a spyglass.

In terms of his own heroics, Thomson told *The Wall Street Journal* that he wasn't prepared to tarnish anything. "Stealing signs is

**"Branca throws," announcer Russ Hodges told listeners, "There's a long fly! It's gonna be it, I believe ... The Giants win the pennant!"**

less than two hours later, Larsen struck out pinch-hitter Dale Mitchell to finish off one of the most clutch performances in Major League history — a perfect game.

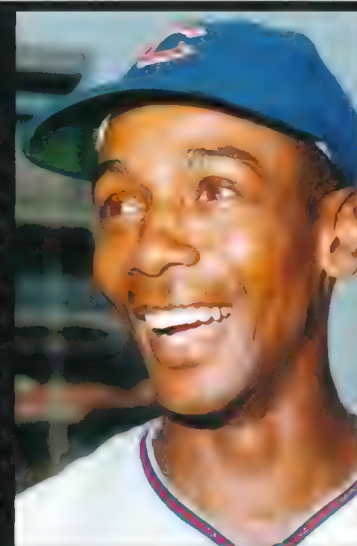
Larsen, who had a 30-40 career record to that point, had started Game 2 of the same World Series and lasted just 1.2 innings. Yet Manager Casey Stengel had faith that the 27-year-old starter could get it done in Game 5. After coming through for his manager, Larsen expressed his gratitude. "When it was over, I was so happy I felt like crying," he admitted in the locker room after the game. "I wanted to win this one for Casey. After what I did [in Game 2], he could have forgotten about me and who would blame him?"

Thanks to his showing in Game 5, few baseball fans would ever forget about Larsen again.

## Mr. Cub

Ernie Banks (right) did not become a Chicago favorite on talent alone. Sure, it helped that Mr. Cub was bursting at the seams with Hall of Fame ability. In 19 seasons, all spent at Wrigley Field, Banks hit 512 home runs, batted .274 and won back-to-back MVP Awards in 1958 and '59.

But it also was his refreshing, upbeat personality that endeared him to the Cubs faithful. Banks was never too busy to sign an autograph or give an interview and never too big to make a rookie feel comfortable. "The only thing wrong with him," his roommate and fellow Cub, Ferguson Jenkins, once told *Sport*, "is you can't turn him off like a radio. He doesn't talk in his sleep, but he falls asleep talking and wakes up talking."

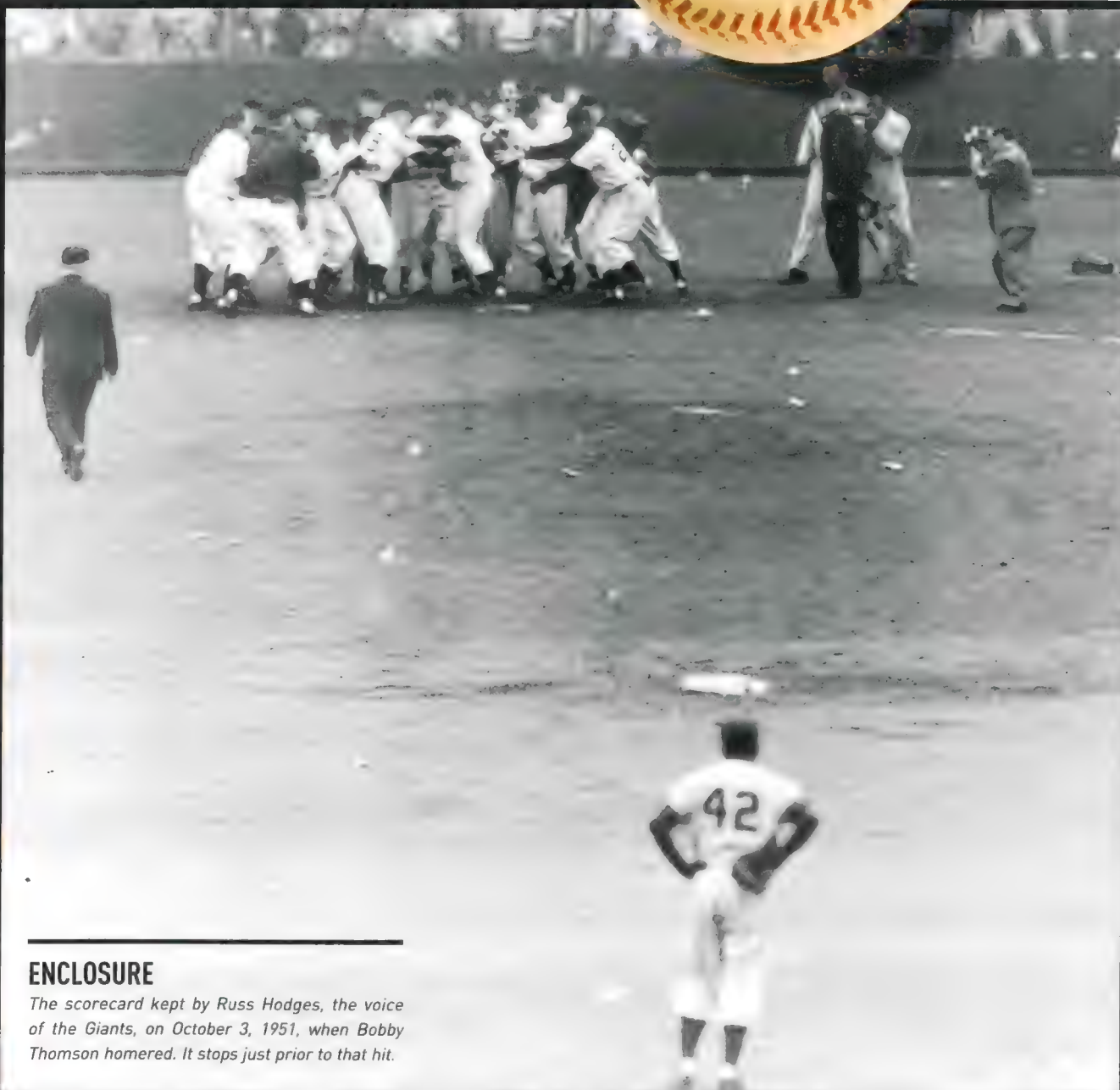
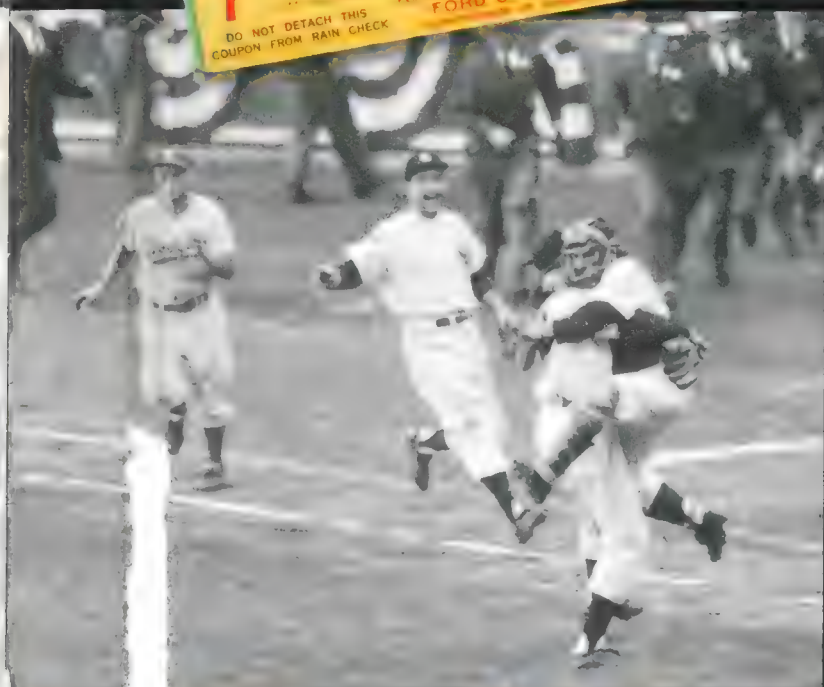
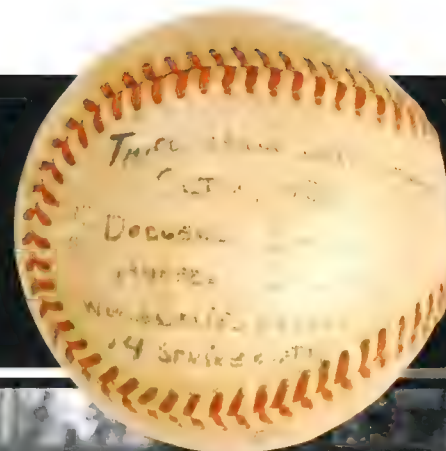






◆ A TICKET STUB FROM GAME 7 OF THE 1958 SERIES, IN WHICH THE YANKEES BEAT MILWAUKEE.

◆ A BALL FROM THE 1953 FALL CLASSIC, WHEN THE YANKEES UPENDED THE DODGERS IN SIX.



#### ENCLOSURE

The scorecard kept by Russ Hodges, the voice of the Giants, on October 3, 1951, when Bobby Thomson homered. It stops just prior to that hit.

◆ CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NEW YORK YANKEES CATCHER YOGI BERRA EMBRACES DON LARSEN AFTER THE HURLER RETIRED ALL 27 BATTERS HE FACED IN GAME 5 OF THE 1954 WORLD SERIES. BROOKLYN'S JACKIE ROBINSON LOOKS ON FROM THE OUTFIELD GRASS AS THE NEW YORK GIANTS MOB BOBBY THOMSON AT HOME PLATE IN 1951. ROBINSON'S DODGERS HAD THEIR SEASON ENDED BY THE HOME RUN. RALPH BRANCA (LEFT) JOKINGLY CHOKES THOMSON. THE TWO BIG LEAGUERS FOREVER WILL BE LINKED BY THE AT-BAT.



# EXPANSION AND RELOCATION

Following a **MOVE WEST** by the Giants and Dodgers, the Majors saw significant growth.

**F**ROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS east of the Mississippi River, Major League Baseball has experienced its fair share of expansion over the years. Perhaps the most significant change came in 1958, when the New York Giants and the Brooklyn Dodgers were uprooted by their owners and taken west to California.

Even now, nearly 50 years later, it is difficult to comprehend the profound impact the move had on the game. Most immediately, it left New York City without an

NL team for the first time in 75 years; a void that was filled four years later with the arrival of the expansion New York Mets. But more importantly, it finally made the national pastime a truly national sport and opened the floodgates for more expansion — to places like the Deep South, the Pacific Northwest and Canada — in the next few decades. In addition, it launched a stadium-building boom unlike any other in the history of U.S. sports, as new teams in new cities opened for business and old teams found new life in new parks. Over the course of the 1960s alone, 10 new ballparks were built. By 1973, the number had risen to 14.

Ironically, it was the failure to build new ballparks in New York that kickstarted it all. In 1956, Giants owner Horace Stoneham, after watching his team's attendance consistently slip over the previous three years, complained to the city that the Polo Grounds, rebuilt in 1911 after a fire, was both inadequate to the needs of the modern game and located in a deteriorating Harlem neighborhood.

Despite a crest of support in 1955, when they won it all, the Brooklyn Dodgers and owner Walter O'Malley were having similar problems with Ebbets Field, which itself had opened in 1913 and was in need of replacement.

## Early Success

As new franchises have opened their gates over the years, often it has taken time for them to find their footing and build a winning tradition. There has been the rare club, though, that has achieved success early on in its existence.

Although the Arizona Diamondbacks won just 65 games in their first year in the league (1998), they were playoff participants by year two. Behind Manager Buck Showalter and a trio of 30-homer hitters in Jay Bell, Luis Gonzalez and Matt Williams — not to mention a dominant season from starter Randy Johnson — the team went 100-62 and strolled to the NL West title by 14 games. Then, in 2001, they became the fastest expansion team to win a World Series (above), as they shocked the New York Yankees in seven games.

The mark was one year faster than the Florida Marlins, who won it all in 1997, their fifth year of existence. And it was four years quicker than the Mets, who fought through a handful of dismal years after joining the Major League ranks in 1962, and built a world championship team in 1969.



city and county officials. As part of the deal, O'Malley would be obligated to build and privately finance a 50,000-seat stadium and exchange land in L.A. for the rights to property in Chavez Ravine, where Dodger Stadium eventually would be constructed.

Stoneham was working simultaneously with George Christopher, the mayor of San Francisco, and a Major League search committee. Voters in the Golden Gate city already had approved a \$5 million bond issue for construction of a new ballpark. Soon, the mayors of both cities and the two owners would meet in joint session to add the finishing touches.

On May 28, 1957, Major League Baseball approved the historic move West, with the stipulation that *both* teams would take the plunge at the same time.

On August 19, the Giants became the first of the two to make their move public, an announcement that *The New York Times* called a "bombshell." The Dodgers soon followed and baseball's most historic relocation was official.

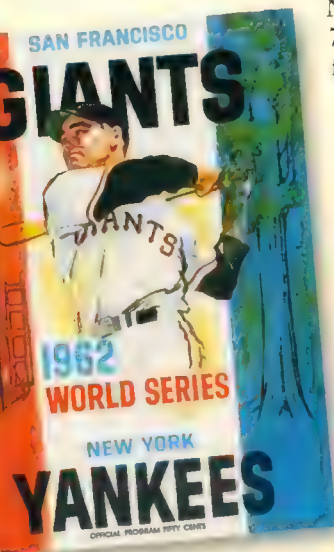
Not long after expansion came growth. When the Giants and Dodgers opened in California in 1958, Major League baseball was comprised of two leagues of eight teams. Over time, the sport has nearly doubled in size with 30 teams populating MLB today. The AL and the NL are themselves now divided into three different divisions. Currently, California has five franchises to support. Texas and Florida each have two. There are teams in Washington, Arizona and Colorado.

Yet through all the movement and additions, the nation's capital was without a franchise from 1972 to 2004. Following the move of the Senators to Texas in 1971, baseball in D.C. was nonexistent.

Then, in the most recent instance of a team relocating, the Montreal Expos moved south to The District to begin 2005 as the Washington Nationals. Thanks to change such as this, fans in new places have teams of their own.



◆ SHOES WORN BY FLORIDA'S CRAIG COUNSELL IN THE 1997 SERIES, THE TEAM'S FIRST TITLE YEAR.



◆ IN 1962, THE GIANTS FELL TO THE YANKEES IN THEIR FIRST WORLD SERIES TRIP AFTER MAKING THE MOVE TO CALIFORNIA.



# OWNERS

**SOME IDEAS WORKED**, others didn't. But through it all, two of the game's **MOST INVENTIVE OWNERS**, Bill Veeck and Charlie Finley, kept things interesting.

**A**T THE END of the biographical passage on Bill Veeck's Hall of Fame plaque, the innovative, free-spirited former owner of the Indians, Browns and White Sox is called "A champion of the little guy." The statement was particularly apt in 1951 when, as owner of the St. Louis Browns, Veeck sent to bat the littlest guy ever to play in the Bigs: a 3-foot-7 man named Eddie Gaedel.

With his team struggling to get men on base, Veeck had brought Gaedel up to his office and had shown him how to crouch so that his strike zone was, as Veeck once described to the *Saturday Evening Post*, "no bigger than a postage stamp." With strict orders not to swing at any pitch, Gaedel promptly was sent into a game to bat once for \$100. Not surprisingly, he walked.

It was not the first, nor would it be the last, of Veeck's unorthodox promotional schemes. As the owner of the Minor League Milwaukee Brewers, he decided to install portable outfield fences that were moved back or forward depending on the power of the opposing team. In Cleveland, he provided babysitting to encourage families to attend games. And he convinced announcer Harry Caray to sing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" at White Sox home games in the 1970s, which became a popular tradition. "There is," Veeck once said, "no nicer way to spend an afternoon or an evening than by going to a baseball game — and it can be made even more delightful." In 1951, the Browns were a struggling team on the field — they would finish 52-102, 46 games behind the first-place New York Yankees in the American League — but with stunts like his use of Gaedel as a batter, attending a game in St. Louis certainly was never boring.

Of course, Veeck wasn't satisfied trying to sell a loser on an annual basis. Like any owner, he wanted his team to win as many games as it could. And his bold style was well suited to the cause. Veeck paid little attention to old tradition and made the moves he felt would best help his team going forward. He signed the first African-American player in the American League (Larry Doby in 1947) and the oldest rookie (42-year-old former Negro Leagues star Satchel Paige in 1948). Both were major contributors on the Indians' 1948 World Series team.

"He stuck by me in all those things I went through," Doby once recalled. "He said 'We're in this together.' Bill was one of the greatest human beings I've ever had the privilege of knowing."





“My whole baseball life was in Brooklyn,” Dodger Duke Snider recalled to *The Sporting News*. “Of course, if we had to move, Los Angeles was the place to go.”



◆ A TICKET STUB FROM THE 1963 WORLD SERIES DEPICTING THE DODGERS' NEW L.A. BALLPARK.



◆ UPPER LEFT: DODGERS OWNER WALTER O'MALLEY (RIGHT) PRESENTS HOME PLATE TO THE MAYOR OF LOS ANGELES, NORRIS POULSON. LOWER LEFT: GIANTS OWNER HORACE STONEHAM (LEFT) — SEEN WITH BOBBY THOMSON AND MANAGER LEO DUROCHER, ENJOYING THOMSON'S FAMOUS 1951 HOMER — FOUND A SUCCESSFUL HOME FOR HIS CLUB IN SAN FRANCISCO SEVEN YEARS LATER. RIGHT: THE NATIONALS, THE LATEST TEAM TO RELOCATE, AT THEIR FIRST-EVER REGULAR SEASON GAME IN WASHINGTON ON APRIL 14, 2005.



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NEGRO NATIONAL LEAGUE

# BASEBALL

POLO GROUNDS

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SUN. SEPT. 3

DOUBLEHEADER - FIRST GAME 2 P. M.



**NEW YORK  
CUBAN STARS**



- VERSUS -

**NEWARK  
EAGLES**



BLEACHERS 60

GRANDSTAND \$1.20



“I can’t guarantee every game will be exciting,” Bill Veeck told the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1959. “But I can provide my fans with entertaining fun.”

◆ AS THE INDIANS’ OWNER, BILL VEECK (LEFT) SIGNED AND SUPPORTED LARRY DOBY, WHO BECAME THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN TO PLAY IN THE AL.



◆ FAR LEFT: CHARLIE FINLEY (LEFT), THE OWNER OF THE A’S, SERVES AS CATCHER FOR THE OPENING PITCH OF THE SEASON. LEFT: BILL VEECK, OUTSIDE COMISKEY PARK, MADE EVEN A LOSING TEAM FUN TO WATCH. ABOVE: EDDIE GADEL, AT 3-FOOT-7 SIGNED BY VEECK AS A STUNT, WALKED IN HIS ONLY MAJOR LEAGUE PLATE APPEARANCE.



Veeck got his start in baseball with the Chicago Cubs at age 11, doing odd jobs around Wrigley Field, where his father worked as the team’s president. By the time Veeck was in his 20s, he was running many aspects of the club; it was Veeck who, in 1937, thought to plant the famous ivy on the outfield wall there.

At Kenyon College in Ohio, the fun-loving Veeck had been a star on the football team. But when he fought in the South Pacific as a marine in World War II, he suffered a devastating injury to his right leg — he had 36 operations on it until the limb had to be amputated in 1949.

Yet it never dampened his approach. “He gave me the idea that you should be a free spirit and be able to take chances,” Minor League owner Jim Paul once said. “That

◆ FAR LEFT: EDGAR MARTINEZ, PREDOMINANTLY A DH, CAN THANK CHARLIE FINLEY FOR THE CHANCE. LEFT: WORKING FOR THE CUBS IN 1937, WHERE HIS FATHER ONCE WAS TEAM PRESIDENT, BILL VEECK HAD IVY PLANTED ON WRIGLEY FIELD’S WALL.

you can’t be afraid to experiment or try something new. And by God, you’ve got to have fun. I don’t think he ever did anything that he didn’t have fun doing.”

Veeck certainly wasn’t the only owner to make a habit of taking bold and calculated risks. Another was Charlie Finley, the owner of the Kansas City and then Oakland Athletics franchise for 21 years and Veeck’s peer, who certainly was not shy about pushing the envelope. Some of Finley’s ideas (the DH, playing the All-Star Game and the World Series at night, to name a few) had a lasting impact, while others (orange baseballs and the three-ball walk, for example) didn’t stick. Yet through it all, Finley always entertained.

A former semipro first baseman, he made millions of dollars in insurance and the stock market. And in 1960, he bought a minority stake in the Kansas City Athletics. His portion soon became a majority, following the death of owner Arnold Johnson and Finley’s decision to buy out the rest of the partners during Spring Training that year.

The idea of the designated hitter, a batter who would hit for the pitcher, came to the table in 1969, when Finley lobbied the other owners about it. He suggested it as a great way to extend the careers of a number of legendary hitters and to allow pitchers to stay in games for more innings. “I feel that a pitcher should be able to continue in the game even though he was pinch-hit for,” Finley said in a news release, according to Ron Bergman. “This would allow more 20-game winners and would ... allow many of the game’s great stars to stay in the game longer after their active playing careers have ended.”

Four years later, the DH rule passed a vote of AL owners and a new position in the game was formed. Today, it is a staple of American League ball, as some of the best hitters in the sport — like David Ortiz, Travis Hafner and Frank Thomas — spend much of their time as designated hitters.

Finley’s propensity for swift action also extended to personnel moves. He changed his manager 18 times in 20 years. According to the *Washington Post*, in 1976, A’s Manager Alvin Dark got a knock on his hotel room door at 5:30 a.m. It was Finley telling him his services were no longer needed. That surprise was nothing compared to what befell Joe Gordon. Thirteen days after Finley described him as “manager of the year,” Gordon was shown the exit.

And yet the moves often led to wins. Finley had a shrewd eye for talent, and the Athletics won five division titles and three World Series crowns under his watch.



# THE 1960s

Led by 24-year-old future Hall of Famer **TOM SEAVER**, the youthful 1969 Mets put together a **MIRACLE SEASON**.

**F**OUNDED IN 1962, it's safe to say that the New York Mets already had established quite a losing tradition as the decade wound to a close. The original '62 Mets set new records for ineptitude, losing a whopping 120 games. Four more 100-loss seasons followed over the next five years, and a reputation was solidified.

But 1969 was different. The clubhouse was full of fresh, young faces, unfamiliar with the franchise's first few years. From the team's early days, the only remaining regular was Ed Kranepool, yet he was just 24 years old. Instead, talented youngsters like outfielder Cleon Jones and pitchers Gary Gentry and Tom Seaver saw reason to believe that the club could compete with the best that the league had to offer.

Seaver, the 24-year-old USC product, was the centerpiece. He had won 16 games in 1967, earning Rookie of the Year honors in the NL, and had matched the total in 1968 — solid numbers considering how few wins there were to go around on the Mets in those years.

Then, in 1969, Seaver became a citywide phenomenon, his weekly outings a major event. He had a stable of Big League pitches at his disposal, including a pair of fastballs, and he seemed able to place them anywhere around the plate that he pleased. "He's so darn good now," Mets pitching coach Rube Walker told *The Sporting News*, after

61

1961 should have been a dream season for the Yankees' Roger Maris (right). By mid-August, he and teammate Mickey Mantle each were well ahead of the pace set by Babe Ruth during his record-setting, 60-homer season of 1927.

But in reality, 1961 was more of a nightmare for Maris, due to the way the fans and the media treated him. And though he reached 61 homers (Mantle's pace slowed due to injury), many questioned the legitimacy of the achievement since he reached it in a 162-game season and not 154, like Ruth. Few, though, could blame Maris just for being happy that the whole thing was finally over.



◆ THIRD BASEMAN ED CHARLES (LEFT), JERRY KOOSMAN AND CATCHER JERRY GROTE OF THE METS CELEBRATE A REMARKABLE TITLE IN 1969. KOOSMAN THREW A COMPLETE GAME TO SEAL IT FOR NEW YORK, WHICH HAD NEVER HAD A WINNING SEASON PRIOR TO '69. THE MIRACLE TEAM FINISHED 38 GAMES OVER .500 (100-62) THAT YEAR.



“Now [the Mets] are in first,” gushed *The New York Times*, “two months after man took his first walk on the moon. Will the wonders never cease?”



◆ LEFT: FOR THE METS, TOM SEAVER WAS A FORCE ON THE MOUND AND IN THE CLUBHOUSE, WHERE HIS LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE HELPED A YOUNG CLUB MATURE QUICKLY. RIGHT: BALTIMORE'S FRANK ROBINSON (TOP) AND BOSTON'S CARL YASTRZEMSKI EACH CAPTURED A TRIPLE CROWN IN THE LATE 1960s.



watching Seaver win his 25th game, “and you know he’s going to get better. But how much better can he get?” He won the Cy Young in ’69 with a 25-7 record and a 2.21 ERA.

Seaver’s attitude off the field, his controlled competitiveness and fire, was contagious. The clubhouse in Queens was free of cliques or tension, as *The New York Times* noted at the time, and to a man, the Mets were serious about work when necessary.

Results quickly followed, as the Mets, who never had finished within 23 games of first place, shot to the top of the National League East by early September, an astonishing feat. The team would finish the regular season at 100-62, eight games clear of the NL East field. And they rolled through the West Champion Braves, 3 games to none, in the first-ever NLCS.

The World Series would be a tougher obstacle, as the seemingly invincible Baltimore Orioles stood in the way. Led by Frank Robinson, Boog Powell and a host of live arms, Baltimore had racked up its own amazing campaign with 109 wins. As Mets outfielder Ron Swoboda later said, the Mets were not lovable losers anymore, but they still were “remarkable underdogs.”

Seaver lost Game 1 to starter Mike Cuellar and the Orioles, 4-1. But New York pitcher Jerry Koosman



◆ THE MIRACLE METS WERE A FAR CRY FROM THE HUMBLER 1962 TEAM, AS WAS SHOWN ON THE COVER OF THE WORLD SERIES PROGRAM.

answered back for the Mets with 8.2 innings of one-run ball in Game 2 — a 2-1 Mets victory. Gentry and a 22-year-old reliever named Nolan Ryan backed that win up with a shutout effort in the next one,

and suddenly, with New York up 2 games to 1, the impossible didn’t seem so out of reach. Thanks to Seaver and Swoboda, it got even closer after Game 4. Seaver gave New York one final heroic effort, capping off his Cy Young season with 10 innings of one-run ball. Swoboda made, as he himself would describe it years later, “a catch for the ages” — a diving scoop on a Brooks Robinson line drive to right that kept the game within reach in the ninth. The Mets won it in the 10th, to go up 3 games to 1.

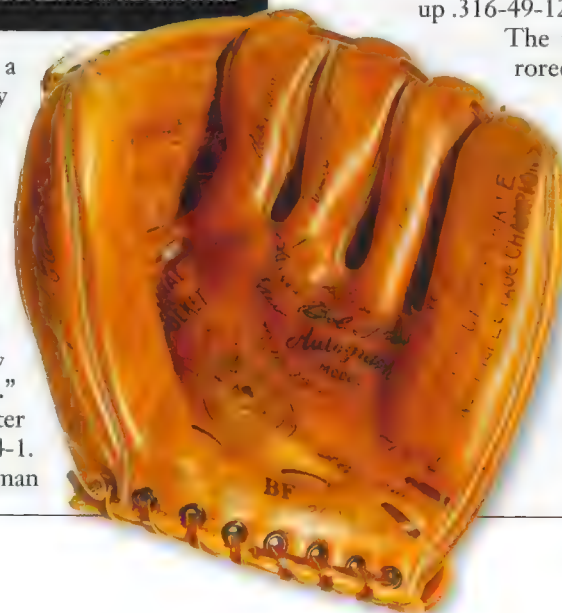
They finished off their first title on October 16 at Shea Stadium in front of a massive crowd of 57,397. Koosman again was the winner, 5-3, and eventual Series MVP Donn Clendenon hit his third homer of the Fall Classic.

On an individual level, the 1960s also saw a number of remarkable performances. In the American League, Frank Robinson and Carl Yastrzemski each won a Triple Crown — leading the league in average, home runs and RBI.

Robinson achieved it first, as a member of the Orioles in 1966. Despite lingering knee trouble, the slugger put up .316-49-122 totals, the best in all categories.

The following year, Yastrzemski mirrored Robinson with an American League Triple Crown of his own.

“He stands in there against lefties much better than he ever did before,” former slugger Walt Dropo told *The Sporting News*. The change helped Yastrzemski beat out Robinson for the batting title that year by 15 points.

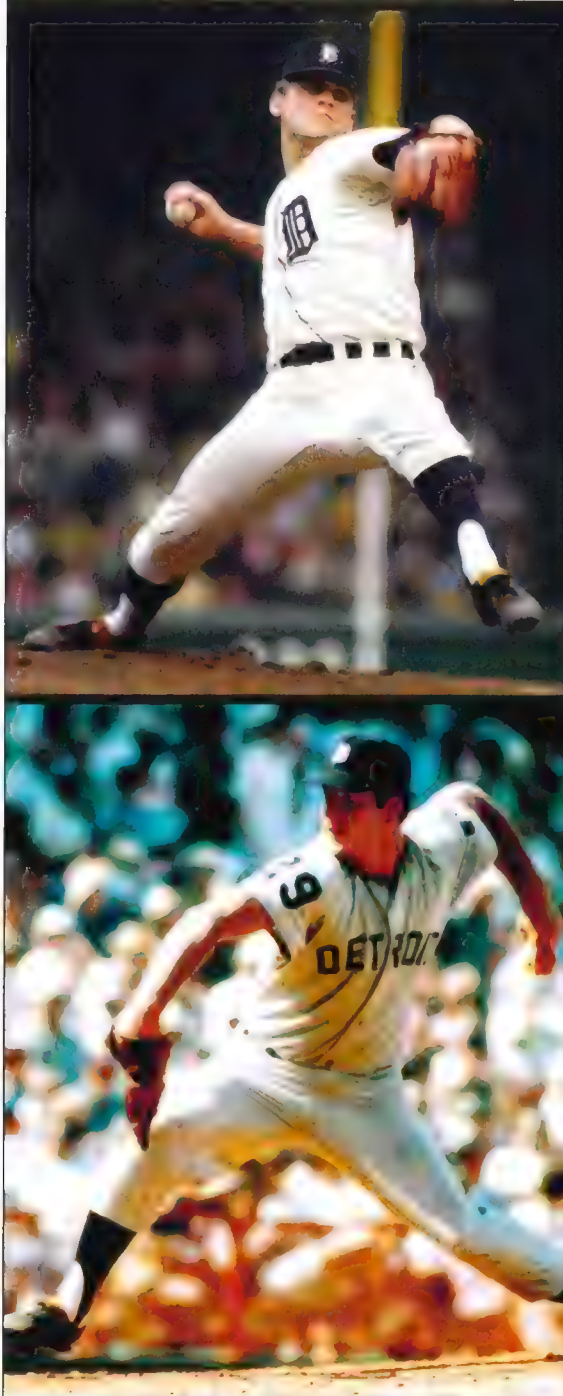


◆ A GLOVE SIGNED BY THE WORLD CHAMPION 1960 PITTSBURGH PIRATES, WHO BEAT THE YANKEES IN A DRAMATIC GAME 7.



# STARTING PITCHERS

To cap a decade of great pitching, **A FEW HURLERS** made 1968 a year to remember.



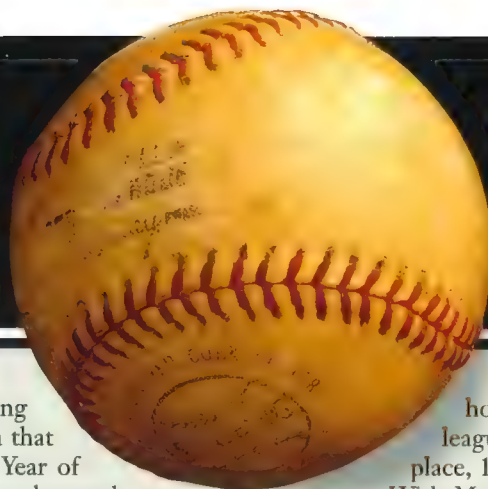
## ENCLOSURES

*A scouting report by legendary executive Branch Rickey of a young Don Drysdale. His praise proved valid, as shown on the pitcher's 1965 Topps card.*

◆ **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: HURLERS DENNY McLAIN, BOB GIBSON AND MICKEY LOLICH DOMINATED OPPOSING HITTERS DURING "THE YEAR OF THE PITCHER" (1968) AND FACED OFF IN THE WORLD SERIES. GIBSON PUT TOGETHER A STELLAR EFFORT, PARTICULARLY IN A GAME 1 SHUTOUT. THE TIGERS ANSWERED, THOUGH, AS LOLICH WON GAME 7 TO CAPTURE THE TITLE.**



◆ THE BALL USED BY BOB GIBSON TO RECORD THE 3,000<sup>TH</sup> STRIKEOUT OF HIS CAREER. HE LED THE LEAGUE IN THAT CATEGORY IN 1968 (268).



“Bob Gibson is the luckiest pitcher I ever saw,” his catcher, Tim McCarver, once joked. “He always pitches when the other team doesn’t score any runs.”

**S**O DOMINANT WAS the starting pitching in 1968, a campaign that has become known as “The Year of the Pitcher,” that the mound was lowered from 15 inches to 10 following the season.

From a lower point, it is more difficult to throw effectively (from a flatter angle, it’s not as easy for a pitcher to spot his pitches, especially low in the zone, and the ball stays in the hitter’s swing zone for a longer period of time). And after 1968, the adjustment seemed necessary. That year, the collective ERA in both leagues was below 3.00, and only one hitter, Washington’s Frank Howard, eclipsed 40 home runs (44). To top it off, the MVPs in both the AL and NL were starting pitchers. The only other time that had happened was in 1924.

In the American League, it was the free-spirited Tigers hurler, Denny McLain — the Majors’ first 30-game winner since Dizzy Dean in 1934 — who won the award. If you asked McLain, though, he had other things that he would rather be doing than playing baseball. “While some experts call him the greatest pitcher in the game today,” wrote *Life* magazine that year, “he insists he’d really rather be an organist.” McLain had learned the organ from his father growing up in Markham, Ill., and his talents eventually landed him a deal with Capitol Records.

In his day job on the mound, he believed wholeheartedly in his own stuff, refusing to waste a pitch when he got into favorable counts. Up 0-2 on a hitter, McLain gave him his best fastball in the strike zone and dared the batter to try and do something with it. “I throw the pitch I want,” he told *Life*, “and make them try to hit it.”

The strategy hadn’t been as successful in previous seasons. In 1967, McLain had gone 17-16 in 37 starts with a 3.79 ERA for Detroit and he had faded down the stretch, when the team needed him most. He didn’t win a game after Aug. 29, and the Tigers finished second to the Red Sox in the pennant chase by a single game.

The following season, even after he rattled off more than a dozen wins in the first few months, McLain was determined to make amends for the previous year’s swoon. “I don’t want to be remembered as the man who won all those games and collapsed in the stretch,” he told *Life*.

Detroit’s monstrous offense certainly helped. The Tigers were the only AL team in 1968 to average more than four runs per game (4.09), and they hit 52 more

home runs than the next team in their league, the Orioles, who finished in second place, 12 games back.

With McLain, Earl Wilson and Mickey Lolich balancing out the attack on the mound, Detroit rolled to 103 wins and a comfortable margin in the race for the World Series. McLain was a consistent contributor throughout the regular season.

When the Tigers reached the Fall Classic, the St. Louis Cardinals, headlined by the NL’s Most Valuable Player, Bob Gibson, stood across the field.

Although he had not won 30 games like McLain, Gibson still had put together one of the most dominant seasons ever. His 1.12 ERA was the lowest in history for a pitcher who threw more than 300 innings and his 13 shutouts were the most by a pitcher in decades. As *The Sporting News* noted, over one stretch of 95 innings that year, Gibson had allowed just two runs (one on a wild pitch).

During one of the most racially turbulent years in the history of the nation, Gibson brought to his performance on the mound an unrelenting fury that echoed the severity of the moment. “In a world filled with hate, prejudice and protest,” Gibson once remarked, “I find that I, too, am filled with hate, prejudice and protest.”

Some of his fire came from his competitiveness, a crucial component of his success. He seldom fraternized with opposing hitters, and his behavior led to the reputation of being cantankerous, something Gibson himself has gone to great lengths to refute over the years.

In reality, when he wasn’t pitching, Gibson could be fun-loving and full of life. As *The Sporting News* noted in 1968, he often was seen ribbing the local fans from the outfield grass prior to games. “I haven’t played in 20 years,” Gibson told writer John Lowe in 1994, “and they’re talking about me now like I’m still playing. Like I’m this guy that hates everybody, kicks dogs and slaps kids. I never have been that guy.”

Gibson dominated his first two starts of the 1968 World Series, including a 4-0 shutout against McLain in Game 1 in which Gibson struck out 17 and walked just one. “You just sacrifice a pitcher when you send him up against Gibson,” former Phillies Manager Eddie Sawyer told *The Sporting News* a few weeks later.

McLain would get the ultimate prize, though. After defeating St. Louis starter Ray Washburn with a dynamic effort in Game 6, McLain watched as his teammate, Lolich, shut down the Cardinals to win the Series for the Tigers the very next day.

## Two of a Kind

Throughout much of the 1960s, Don Drysdale (far right) and Sandy Koufax were inseparable, “as though their arms were attached to the same body,” noted *The Sporting News* in 1965. And luckily for the Dodgers, they mirrored each other in dominance on the mound, too.

The pair won a combined four Cy Young Awards between 1962 and ’66, while over the same period, Koufax won an unprecedented five straight ERA crowns. He marveled even his stellar teammate. “When Sandy’s right,” Drysdale told *The Sporting News*, “I’m surprised that anybody hits the ball off him at all. I’m surprised when he doesn’t strike everybody out.” In 1965, when he whiffed a then-modern record 382 batters, Koufax nearly did.

That same season, Drysdale was brilliant, as well. He won 23 games and posted a 2.77 ERA. He was no slouch at the plate either, batting .300 in 130 at-bats.

And with Drysdale and Koufax anchoring the staff, Los Angeles rolled to a pair of World Series titles in 1963 and ’65. They overcame a mediocre offense by leading the NL in ERA both seasons.





# BROADCASTERS

Vin Scully's legendary career is highlighted by ONE POETIC NIGHT in September 1965.

**O**N THE NIGHT of September 9, 1965, the Dodgers' Sandy Koufax delivered the most dominant pitching performance of his illustrious career — a perfect game against the Chicago Cubs. Fans who tuned in heard it narrated by the voice of Vin Scully, the legendary baseball broadcaster, who described the action with a lyrical beauty, as only he could.

"There are 29,000 people in the ballpark, and a million butterflies," Scully announced at the beginning of the ninth and final inning during what is considered by some to be the best baseball broadcast of all time. "I would think that the mound at Dodger Stadium right now is the loneliest place in the world."

For avid fans of the game throughout the 20th century, broadcasters like Scully have served as constant accompaniment. In the sport's radio days, their words brought listeners up close, painting a picture of every ball and strike with a rich vocabulary. As baseball has moved primarily over to television, the broadcaster's role during games has changed slightly, but his relationship with the everyday fan remains an important one.

Scully has been right there through it all, having called Dodgers games since the mid-1950s. He says that he tries to be as accurate as possible in the booth, to call the play quickly, and then "to shut up and let the crowd make the noise." After Koufax completed his perfect game against Ron Santo, Ernie Banks and the Cubs, Scully stayed quiet for more than half a minute, letting the audience soak up the atmosphere at Dodgers Stadium without interruption.

He got his start at Fordham University in 1945, where he wrote for the school paper, sang in a barbershop quartet and played center field for the baseball team. And in 1949, Scully's senior year, he jumped at an opportunity to work at a local radio station.

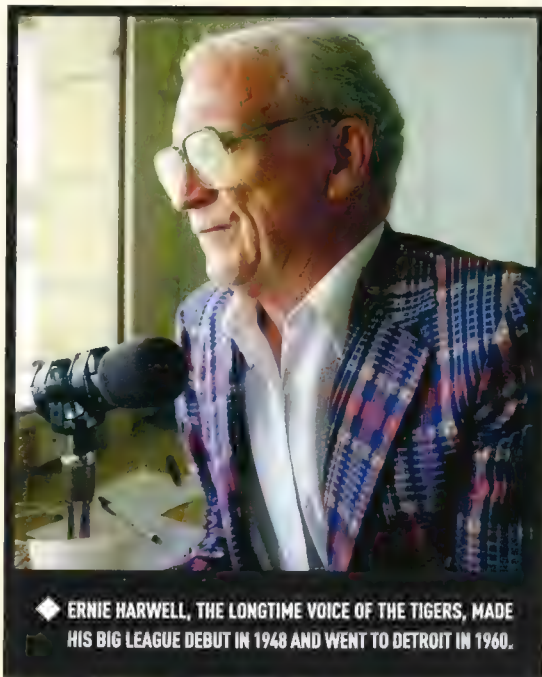
It didn't take long for Scully to catch on as a professional. Working as a broadcaster with WTOP in Washington, he was introduced to Red Barber, the sports director at CBS and a legendary baseball broadcaster in his own right. Barber gave Scully a shot, letting him broadcast a college football game. Scully took advantage, and soon, at age 22, was offered a \$5,000 salary to assist Barber at Dodgers games as the third broadcaster. It was the beginning of a legendary relationship.

"He was strict with me," says Scully of the father-son type bond he had with Barber, "and I was very much influenced by him." Barber taught Scully to be himself behind the microphone, to not listen to other people's styles in the booth and "water down your wine." Barber also put a heavy emphasis on preparation, something the novice Scully took to heart.

Scully couldn't have asked for a better mentor. Barber was informative and direct in his broadcasts, and he also was unbiased. In 1947, the Dodgers brought up Jackie Robinson, the game's first African-American player. Barber, raised in the segregated south, refused to let his heritage influence what he said on the air. As time passed,

Barber and Robinson eventually became friends. "Many people take credit for it, but Red had more influence on the acceptance of Jackie Robinson than anyone alive," former Dodgers executive Buzzy Bavasi told the *Tallahassee Democrat*. "He portrayed Jackie as a player; he portrayed him as a good player. And Jackie told me many times that he appreciated the way Red handled it."

Barber was born in Columbus, Miss. His father was a railroad conductor, his mother an English teacher. He began his career with the Cincinnati Reds in 1934 and, according to the *Tallahassee Democrat*, the first Major League game that Barber called was also the first he attended. He later would come to define the profession. "To say he



◆ ERNIE HARWELL, THE LONGTIME VOICE OF THE TIGERS, MADE HIS BIG LEAGUE DEBUT IN 1948 AND WENT TO DETROIT IN 1960.

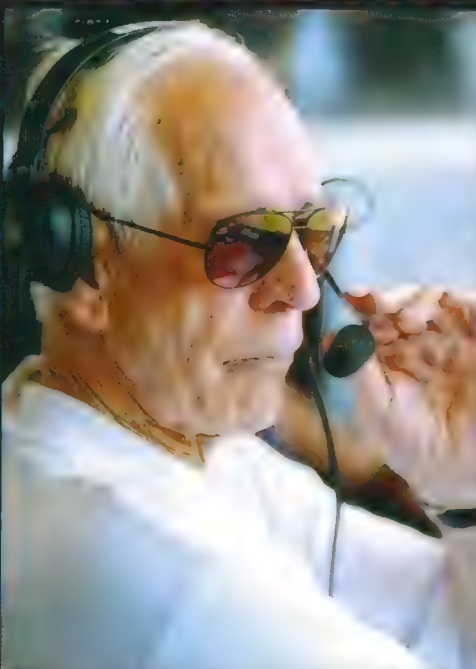




“There are times,” says Vin Scully, the legendary voice of the Dodgers, “when words are absolutely superfluous. So I try to stay out of it.”



◆ A SIGN FOR THE RESTAURANT NAMED AFTER HARRY CARAY IN CHICAGO, WHERE HE WAS A FAN FAVORITE.



◆ CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: VIN SCULLY HAS BUILT AN IMPRESSIVE CAREER AS THE VOICE OF THE DODGERS. HARRY CARAY DEVELOPED A SPECIAL RAPPORT WITH THE NORTH SIDE OF CHICAGO, WHERE HE BROADCAST CUBS GAMES WITH HIS TRADEMARK HONESTY. RED BARBER WAS A LEGENDARY VOICE IN THE BROADCAST BOOTH AND A MENTOR TO SCULLY. JACK BUCK, WHO BEGAN WITH CARAY AND THE ST. LOUIS CARDINALS IN 1954, HAD THE CHANCE TO WORK GAMES WITH HIS SON, JOE.

broadcast ballgames is like saying Babe Ruth played baseball,” wrote Bob Minzesheimer in *USA Today* at the time of Barber’s death in 1992.

Fourteen years before he passed away, Barber was honored at the Baseball Hall of Fame, alongside former Yankees broadcaster Mel Allen, with the first Ford C. Frick Award, given annually to broadcasters for “major contributions to baseball.”

Other legendary voices, like Bob Elson, Russ Hodges and Ernie Harwell, would follow in the next few years. Then, in 1987, it was Jack Buck’s turn.

Buck, the longtime voice of the St. Louis Cardinals, always was sharp and funny in the booth. “He prepared, but in a loose way,” analyst Pat Summerall once told ESPN.com. “‘This is not a funeral,’ he’d say. ‘We’re going to have fun, and we hope people do, too.’”

His most famous calls reflected his fun-loving persona. “Go crazy, folks! Go crazy!” he shouted, after Ozzie Smith homered against the Los Angeles Dodgers in the 1985 playoffs. “I don’t believe what I just saw!” he exclaimed upon Kirk Gibson’s miracle homer in the 1988 Series. Late in his career, Buck also got to work in the booth with his son, Joe, fulfilling a dream held by many fathers.

Jack’s original partner in the Cardinals booth was the legendary Harry Caray, whom he joined in 1954. Caray, a native of St. Louis, was a unique character who pulled no punches in his broadcasts. At times, the openness didn’t sit well with players, but fans loved him for his authenticity. “If a fan had a chance to get behind a mike like I do,” Caray once told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, “he would sound like I do.” He was honored as a recipient of the Ford C. Frick Award in 1989.

Having spent 25 years in the St. Louis booth, Caray was fired by Anheuser-Busch, Inc., which owned the team, after the 1969 season. But he would land on his feet, first broadcasting for the A’s and White Sox, and then on Chicago’s North Side with the Cubs, where he became a fan favorite. “The Mayor of Rush Street,” they often called him, for his propensity to socialize with fans at the local taverns. He would go on to broadcast over 8,300 games in total during his 53-year career in the Majors.

Like all great announcers, Caray had a unique style all his own. Most importantly, like his successful peers, he made the everyday fan feel as if he had a friend in the booth each and every game.



# THE 1970s

In 1974, **HANK AARON** eclipsed **BABE RUTH** to become baseball's all-time **HOME RUN KING**.

**E**NTERING THE 1974 season, it was no longer a question of if but rather when Hank Aaron would break baseball's most revered record: Babe Ruth's 714 home runs. Prior to Opening Day, the prolific Atlanta right fielder was camped on 713, just one short of tying the Bambino, the most celebrated hero in baseball history.

To some of today's fans, Aaron may seem an unlikely candidate to stand as the game's longball king. He never splashed the national news with a 70-home run season, nor did he hit 60 or even 50 in a year. Although the homer probably is baseball's flashiest play, Aaron was not an in-your-face type player or person. "By nature, Hank Aaron is not loud," noted the *Sunday Republican* late in the 1974 season. "Nor does he bludgeon anybody over the head with his opinions."

What Aaron was, however, was strong and consistent. He grew up in Mobile, Ala., swinging cross-handed, which likely contributed a great deal to the strength of his wrists. It was his quick wrists that allowed him to see each pitch longer than most hitters, before whipping the bat through the zone with great authority. "He had a lot of Stan Musial in his stance," Don Drysdale once observed. "From the mound, they both seemed to coil at you."

With such an approach, Aaron led the league in homers four times, the last coming in 1967, when he hit 39. He hit 40 or more in a campaign eight times.

More than just a power hitter, though, Aaron, a career .305 batter, was an all-around talent. He won the 1957 MVP Award, blasting a home run to clinch the pennant for the Braves. He won a pair of batting titles, three Gold Glove Awards and finished his career with the most RBI, total bases and extra-base hits in baseball history. Yet the Hall of Famer forever will be remembered as the player who surpassed Ruth.

**"I've been [hitting homers] for 20 years," Hank Aaron told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in 1974. "It just took some people 19 years to notice it."**

In Cincinnati, on his first swing of 1974, Aaron tied the record with his 714th blast. Then, four days later and back in front of his hometown fans, Aaron sent an Al Downing pitch over the left-center field wall for No. 715.

As he trotted around the bases, Aaron undoubtedly felt a wave of mixed emotions, from pure joy to great relief, rushing through his mind. "There was a time, especially last September," Aaron had admitted to Billy Lyon in '74, "when I was wishin' I could hit one every time I went up there so that all of this would be over."

Chasing Ruth, it seems, has never been easy on a player, be it Barry Bonds in 2006, Roger Maris in 1961 or Aaron in the 1970s. As an African American going after the Bambino's total, Aaron received hate mail from racist fans who didn't want to see him pass the Babe. "I've never

tried to make people forget Babe Ruth," Aaron famously said. "I'd just like them to remember Henry Aaron."

When Aaron joined the Braves organization in 1952, there were two African-American pitchers in the Majors (Satchel Paige in St. Louis and Joe Black with the Dodgers). More than two decades later, there were dozens, including Downing.

Having witnessed such progress, Aaron sought to use his newfound status as a national hero to encourage even greater growth. He pressed Major League owners to hire more African Americans for their managerial and front office positions. And he took pride in dispelling any myths as to what African-American ballplayers could and could not accomplish.

"Babe Ruth's record was one thing," Aaron told the *Sunday Republican*. "What was more important to me, what I wanted

## Standing Up

"I do not feel that I am a piece of property," wrote former Cardinal Curt Flood (right) in a letter to Commissioner Bowie Kuhn, "to be bought and sold irrespective of my wishes." Upon receiving word that he had been traded by St. Louis to Philadelphia in 1969, Flood set out to enact change in the game's economic system — which at the time, forced a player to negotiate with just one team for his entire career.

Flood's point was that while he was being paid well as a Major Leaguer, the league's rules left him with few rights. His team had control over him, and he had no ability to negotiate with any other franchise. Although Flood lost his case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1972, his protest paved the way for free agency soon after — a move that has drastically changed the modern baseball landscape. Flood's actions were not without personal sacrifice, though, as sitting out cost him the prime of his career.



to prove to everybody, was that a black player can play ball and function well under extreme pressure. That was what I always had in the back of my mind."

Extreme pressure did not seem to bother Reggie Jackson, either. As a member of the A's and Yankees in the 1970s, the outfielder built a reputation for delivering in October.

In his first World Series, when his A's faced the Mets in 1973, Jackson was named the MVP, batting .310 with a homer and six RBI. But that was nothing compared to 1977, when as a member of the Yankees, he came up with one of the most breathtaking performances in the history of the game. In the decisive game of the series, Jackson hit three home runs on three consecutive pitches to help bury Los Angeles, and was named Series MVP once again.

"Talent's nice," he said to *Baseball* magazine. "You need it. But it's not enough. You've got to have a champion's heart if you want to be a champion. I consider myself a champion."



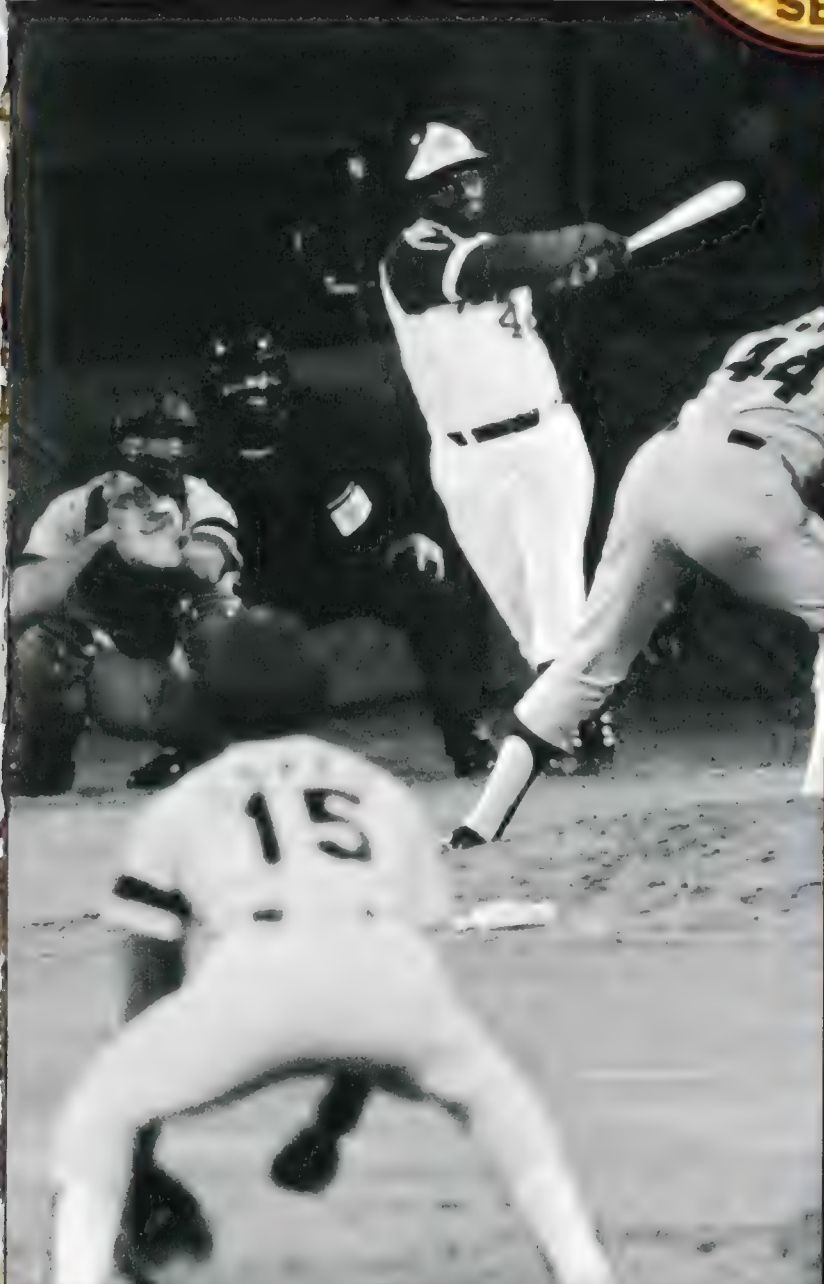
◆ A SOUVENIR PIN GIVEN TO THE PRESS AT THE 1973 SERIES, WHICH THE METS DROPPED TO OAKLAND IN SEVEN GAMES.



◆ A SOUVENIR PIN FROM THE 1973 SERIES. BERT CAMPANERIS AND REGGIE JACKSON HOMERED IN GAME 7 TO HELP THE A'S WIN.



◆ A PROGRAM FROM THE 1977 FALL CLASSIC, WON BY THE NEW YORK YANKEES IN SIX GAMES OVER THE L.A. DODGERS.

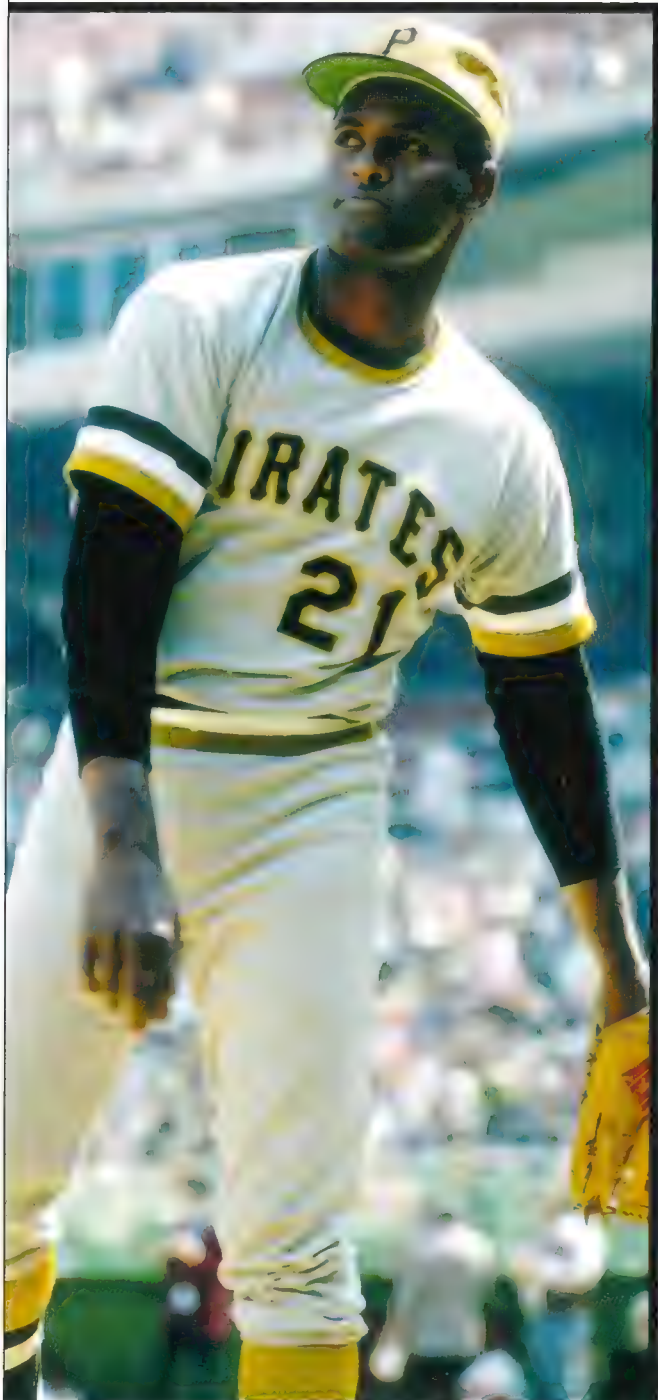


◆ LEFT: HANK AARON BELTS HOME RUN NO. 715 OF HIS ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER TO BREAK RUTH'S RECORD. THE HISTORIC SHOT CAME OFF OF LOS ANGELES DODGERS LEFTY AL DOWNING. OVER THE NEXT FEW SEASONS, AARON WOULD RUN HIS ALL-TIME MARK TO 755. RIGHT: REGGIE JACKSON MADE A NAME FOR HIMSELF WITH HIS PLAYOFF HEROICS, WHICH EARNED HIM THE MONIKER "MR. OCTOBER." THE FUTURE HALL OF FAME WAS TWICE NAMED THE WORLD SERIES MVP (1973, 1977). HE HAD 40 CAREER POSTSEASON RBI.



# OUTFIELDERS

Prior to his tragic passing, **ROBERTO CLEMENTE** wowed fans with his defensive flair.



**I**N THE FALL of 1971, Bill Mazerowski, the great Pirates second baseman, wrote an article reflecting on his 16 years with outfielder Roberto Clemente. "A lot of players are tagged superstars when they are really just super-hitters," Mazerowski wrote in *Sport*. "When you're discussing superstars, you're talking Willie Mays, Henry Aaron and Clemente." From his view, few players in baseball possessed the same combination of offense, speed and defensive prowess as Clemente.

He certainly had skill at the plate. Over the course of his career, he captured four batting titles, compiling 3,000 hits in the process. He also could dazzle with his grace and his arm in the outfield. In the same article, Mazerowski recalled seeing the legendary Puerto Rican, who won 12 Gold Gloves, hurl a ball from the gate in right-center field at Forbes Field to home plate on a fly — a mere 460 feet. Not surprisingly, once the games began, few were willing to test him. Clemente's arm, wrote Roger Angell, "sent the runners scurrying like mice back to their bases."

"He would make sure that he had good balance in throwing," teammate Willie Stargell said. "Everything was thrown across the seams. And he knew how to throw the ball so that it could land in a certain spot and make one perfect hop to the infielder or catcher."

Off the field, Clemente was much more giving. He believed strongly that all people should be treated equally. "He's the same person to the clubhouse boys that he is to the league president," wrote Mazerowski in *Sport* in 1971.

As a result, Clemente dedicated much of his time away from the ballpark to helping those less fortunate than himself in any way that he could. "If you have a chance to accomplish something that will make things better for people coming behind you," his legendary motto went, "and you don't do that, you are wasting your time on this earth."

Tragically, it was such humanitarian efforts that would cost Clemente his life. On December 31, 1972, the 38-year-old was delivering relief supplies to people in Nicaragua



◆ FAR LEFT: ROBERTO CLEMENTE, WHO WAS A CAREER PIRATE, LOOSENS UP HIS LEGENDARY THROWING ARM. LEFT: A U.S. STAMP HONORING CLEMENTE, A NATIVE OF PUERTO RICO.

who were suffering as a result of a devastating earthquake. His plane crashed shortly after it took off, killing Clemente and three others. His death devastated the baseball universe, but his memory continues to inspire people to have a positive impact on the world. Major League Baseball gives a humanitarian award in his honor every year.

When discussing the greatest defensive outfielders of all time, fans of the game often mention Mays alongside Clemente. Debuting four years prior to Clemente (in 1951), Mays also had a flair for the dramatic.

In his first years, he delighted fans and marveled sportswriters with his famed basket catches — keeping his glove low by his stomach

and flicking it at the ball, only at the last possible second.

Mays played shallow, using his speed to chase down deep balls. In 1951, it is said, Mays raced in on a low liner and his hat flew off in the process. Instinctively, the center fielder reached and grabbed the hat out of the air with his bare hand, while snagging the ball with his glove.

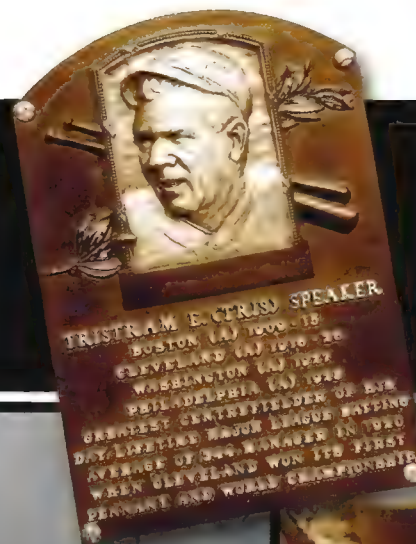
"Willie could break the batter's heart with astonishing, acrobatic saves," wrote *Time* in 1954. "Everything he did in the field he did instinctively well."

His manager, Leo Durocher, and his teammates loved him for it. From the start, they could tell he would be a star. When he struggled with just one hit in his first 26 at-bats in 1951, a distraught Mays told his manager, according to *Time*, that he believed he should be sent down to the Minors. Durocher put his arm on Mays' shoulders, and said, "Son, you're not going anywhere but here. Just keep swinging, because you're my center fielder, even if you don't get a hit for the rest of the season."

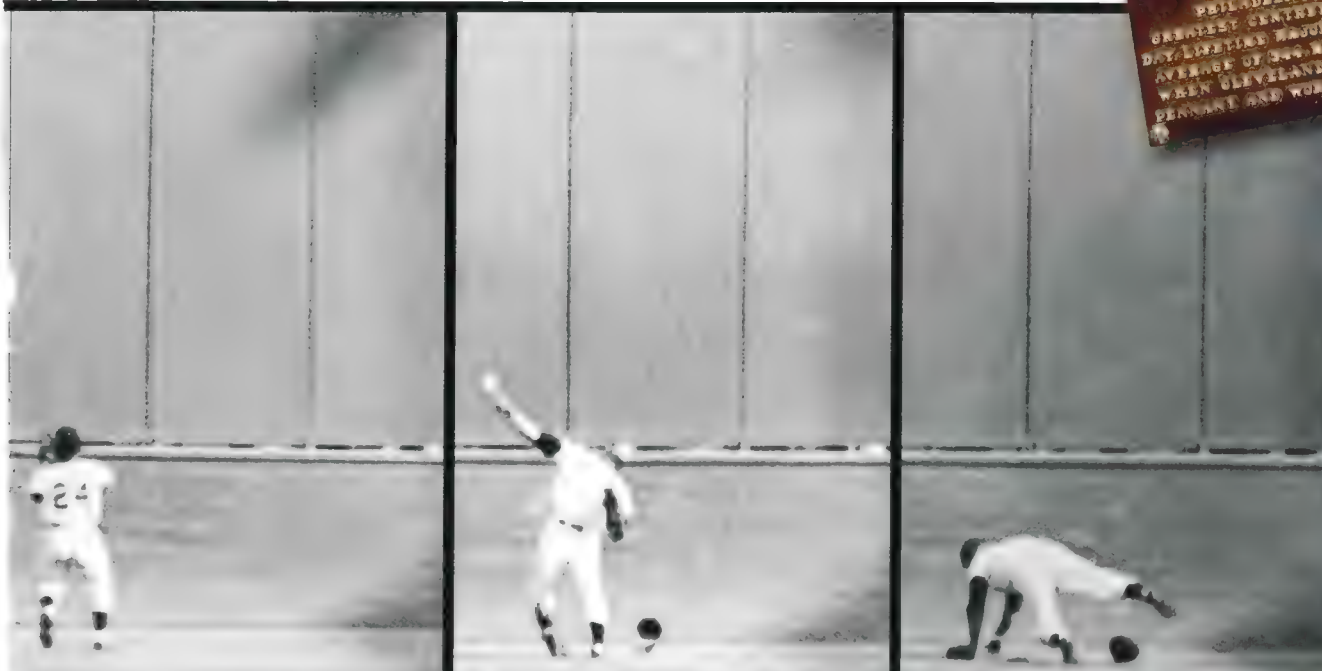
The talk paid off, as soon Mays' bat caught up with his remarkable defense. He won a batting title in 1954, one of his two MVP campaigns. He would lead the league in homers and stolen bases four times each in the Bigs.



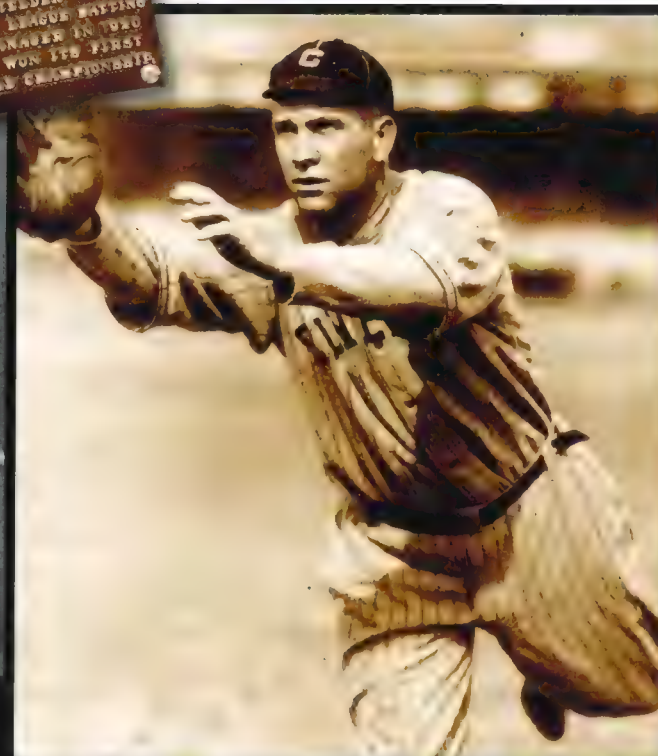
**“I don’t care who you name, Mays is just as good, maybe better,” said former Major League outfielder Harry Hooper. “He’s a throwback to the old days.”**



◆ THE HALL OF FAME PLAQUE FOR TRIS SPEAKER, WHOSE SPEED AND ABILITY TO JUDGE FLY BALLS MADE HIM A LEGEND.



◆ ABOVE: WILLIE MAYS MAKES HIS FAMOUS CATCH IN THE 1954 WORLD SERIES, CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE THE BEST DEFENSIVE PLAY OF ALL TIME. RIGHT TOP: TRIS SPEAKER SHOWS HIS FAMOUS GLOVEWORK. HE WAS KNOWN FOR TURNING GAPPERS INTO OUTS. RIGHT BOTTOM: ROBERTO CLEMENTE MAKES A TRADEMARK LEAPING GRAB AT THE WALL.



The play that came to define his brilliant career, though, occurred in Game 1 of the 1954 World Series. To baseball fans, it’s known simply as The Catch — a feat so inspiring that it is still considered one of the greatest ever made on a baseball diamond.

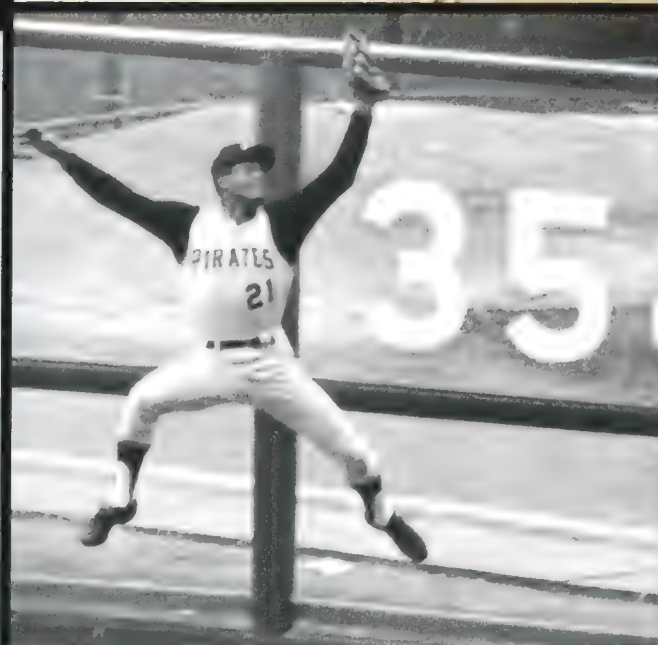
With runners on first and second, the score knotted at 2-2, Cleveland’s Vic Wertz crushed a 2-2 pitch to deep center field — a seemingly sure extra-base hit, particularly with the amount of open space in center at the vast Polo Grounds. But Mays used his trademark speed to get close and then, with his back to the infield, was able to somehow guide the baseball over his shoulder and into his cradled mitt. As if the catch itself wasn’t brilliant enough, Mays still had the presence of mind to whirl around and throw the ball back to the infield, keeping Larry Doby (the runner at second base) from trying to score on a tag play. All in a day’s work for Mays. “It was his solemn duty to catch any ball that wasn’t in the stands,” said teammate Monte Irvin.

Before Mays and Clemente wowed with the leather in the outfield, there was Joe DiMaggio, an all-time great, and, of course, Tris Speaker, who debuted with Boston in 1907 for the first of his 22 seasons. Speaker, a Texas cowboy, twice broke his right arm riding broncos, according to *The Sporting News*, which forced him to learn to throw with his left arm as an outfielder. It didn’t seem to matter much at all. As a lefty, he set the record twice for the most outfield assists in a season in the American League (35).

Like Mays, Speaker played shallow, using his speed to trace any shots over his head. It also didn’t hurt that he could read the ball so well off the bat.

## ENCLOSURES

Louisville Slugger kept the bat order card to track the requests made by Roberto Clemente for equipment. It stops upon his passing in 1972. The scorecard from the game in which Clemente struck his 3,000th career hit. It would be the final one of his Hall of Fame career.





# MANAGERS

Following an **UNIMPRESSIVE** playing career, Sparky Anderson found his **TRUE CALLING** as a **MAJOR LEAGUE SKIPPER**.

**I**N ONE SEASON as a Major Leaguer, Sparky Anderson hit .218 for the 1959 Philadelphia Phillies, with no home runs and 34 RBI. Forty-one years later, following a brilliant career as manager of the Cincinnati Reds and the Detroit Tigers, including three World Series crowns, he was inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Anderson got his shot to take the reigns of the Reds in 1970. At the time, he was a little-known coach for the San Diego Padres with five years of managerial experience in the Minors; a no-name taking over a team of big stars, which included Hall of Famers such as Johnny Bench and Tony Perez, not to mention quality players like Pete Rose and Dave Concepcion.

Yet when it came to gaining the respect of his players, Anderson didn't have an issue. "You don't demand respect," he once told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. "You have to earn it." And earn it he did with an authentic approach that his players greatly appreciated.

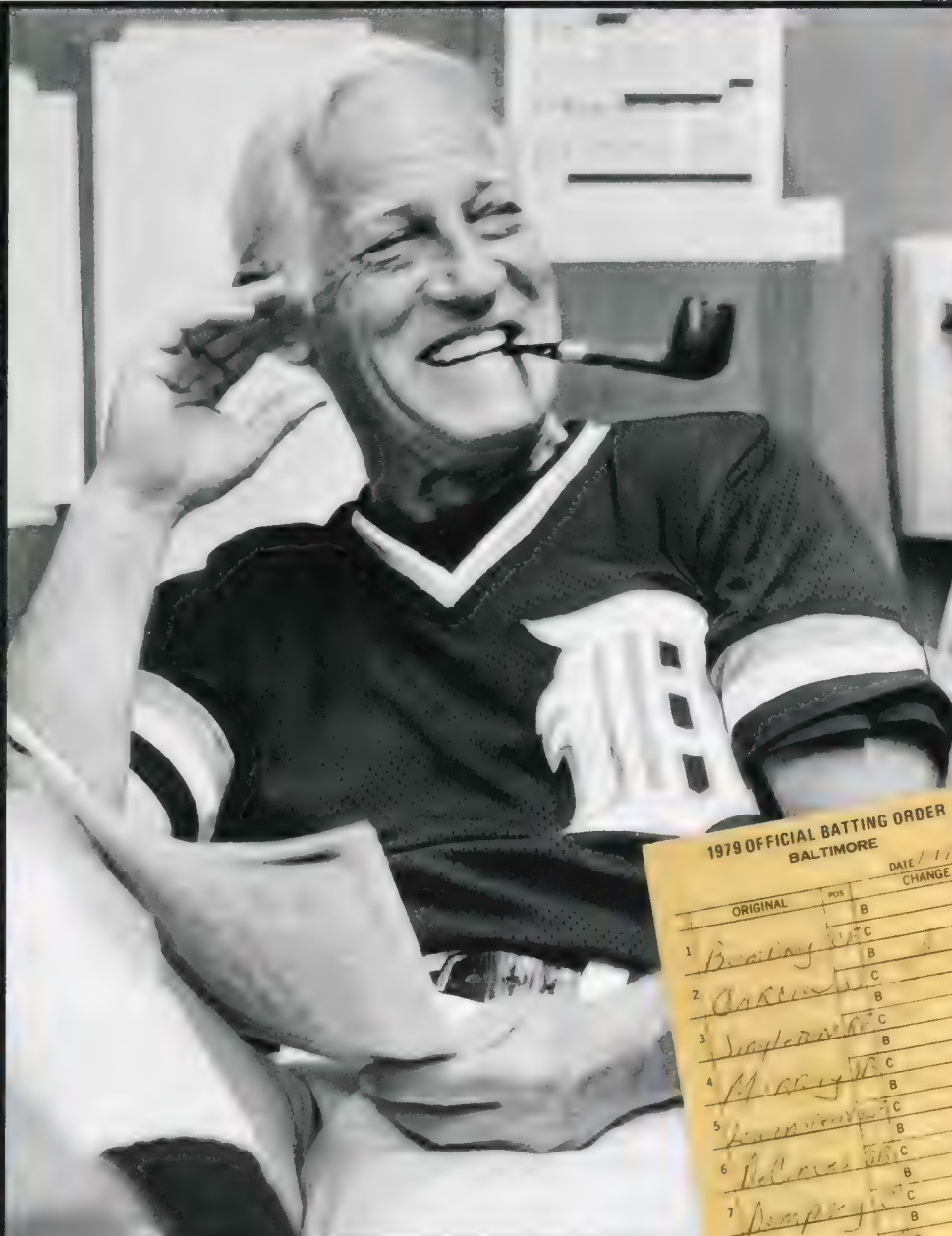
It helped that in Anderson's first year, the club won 102 games and went to the World Series. "Winning is the only thing that breeds happiness," Anderson said to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. "I've never seen a happy losing club." But there were smiles all around that first year. Good thing, because had they lost more often, many probably would have questioned Anderson's managerial skills.

## Stating Their Case

Probably the most visible part of the modern-day manager's job is having a "discussion" with the umpire over a call on the field. These days, fans revel in the sight of the hometown skipper blowing a gasket on the infield dirt or going nose-to-nose with the man behind the plate.



But what is the most effective way for a manager to argue his team's point? Showing up the men in blue usually doesn't get the skipper very far. "These days you see more and more umpires conferring with each other, and that is a good thing," New York's Joe Torre (above) said. "So instead of getting angry, which I used to do a lot when I was a younger manager, I'll say, 'At least get help on that one.'"



◆ ABOVE: SPARKY ANDERSON, AS MANAGER OF THE DETROIT TIGERS, EARNED RESPECT IN A MAJOR LEAGUE CLUBHOUSE WITH HIS GENUINE APPROACH. RIGHT: A SCORECARD USED BY ANOTHER LEGENDARY SKIPPER, EARL WEAVER, IN GAME 7 OF THE 1979 WORLD SERIES.

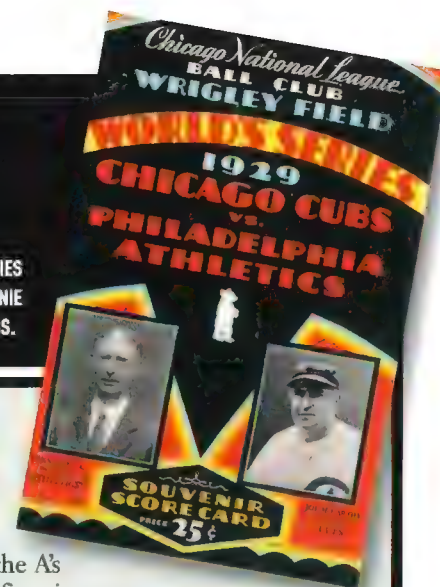






◆ CASEY STENGEL (FAR LEFT) WON WITH THE NEW YORK YANKEES, WHILE BOBBY COX HAS MANAGED AN IMPRESSIVE RUN OF DIVISION TITLES IN ATLANTA.

◆ THE COVER OF THE 1929 WORLD SERIES PROGRAM. THE FALL CLASSIC PIT CONNIE MACK'S A'S AGAINST THE CHICAGO CUBS.



When he did experience some losing, in year two, Anderson was much more equipped to handle it. Following the down season, he set all new standards for the team. Players had to get their weight to certain designated levels, had to be in their rooms by 11 p.m. during Spring Training and couldn't look forward to any postgame food spreads during that upcoming season, according to Earl Lawson.

Cincinnati won 95 games the following year and headed to the Fall Classic again. In Anderson's nine years with the Reds, the team would make five playoff trips, earning the moniker "Big Red Machine."

Anderson is far from the only well-known manager with a sub-par playing career on his resume. Connie Mack, the longtime manager of the Philadelphia A's, spent 11 years in the Bigs, mostly as a catcher, batting .245 with five career homers.

He knew how to deal with people, though, and had a mind for the game. In 1894, he was named player-manager of the Pirates. The team struggled in his three seasons and Mack was fired.

But it wasn't long before he found his way back to the dugout, rounding up a gig in the Western League with Milwaukee. When the league was transformed into the American League, Mack was given the managerial job and partial ownership of the Philadelphia franchise, according to *Philly Sport Magazine*. Being an owner would prove key to Mack's career development — as much as the team struggled at times, he wasn't about to fire *himself*.

As a skipper, he shed his uniform and always wore a suit on the bench, yet there was little corporate coldness in his managerial style. Mack refused to publicly chide his players, preferring to have a quiet word. That applied to the umpires, too. According to *Philly Sport Magazine*, he was tossed from only one game, ever, and that was in the 19th century.

Mack spent 50 years as the A's manager, finally hanging up his suit in 1951. He won five World Series and captained 25 winning seasons. But there were plenty of down times,

too, as the franchise struggled through long stretches of losing. Between 1915 and '21, for example, Mack and the A's lost 100 or more games five times.

Through it all, Mack was a true gentleman. "Whatever you would want in a man," outfielder Roger "Doc" Cramer said to *Philly Sport Magazine*, "Mr. Mack was it."

Casey Stengel managed his share of losing teams, as well, particularly early in his managerial career. In his first eight years as a skipper, only one of Stengel's teams cracked the .500 mark.

All that changed when Stengel took over the New York Yankees in 1949, a team stacked with talents like Joe DiMaggio, Phil Rizzuto, Tommy Henrich, Vic Raschi, Allie Reynolds and Gerry Coleman. And with that type of ability on

**"I have never," Connie Mack once remarked, according to *Philly Sport Magazine*, "indulged in the habit of swearing at my boys."**

his side, Stengel rolled to five straight World Series titles from 1949–53. He added two more before the decade was out, and a legendary reputation was established.

In the modern era, only Bobby Cox, Joe Torre and Tony La Russa have come close to matching such success. Although Cox has captured just one World Series title, he has guided the Braves to an incredible regular-season record, including 14 straight division crowns from 1991 to 2005. He also has a good reputation amongst his players.

"He gives credit to players publicly and criticizes them privately," wrote Dave Kindred in 1996. "As a result, his clubhouse is a happy one."

Standing alongside Cox as one of the game's truly established skippers is La Russa, the leader of the Cardinals, A's and White Sox. La Russa, whose club won the Series in 2006, is a determined and intelligent manager with an eye for talent. Like many of his predecessors, he did not have a stellar playing career — he played in only 132 games and hit .199 in 176 at-bats. But La Russa is dedicated to the game and knows how to get the best out of his roster, emphasizing that players be "hard-playing, very aggressive, very fundamental," according to *The Riverfront Times*.

◆ LEFT: MACK WEARING HIS TRADEMARK SUIT IN THE DUGOUT. HE SPENT 50 YEARS AS THE PHILADELPHIA SKIPPER.



# THE 1980s

**BASEBALL ENTERTAINMENT** was in full supply throughout the decade, be it between the lines or **AT THE BOX OFFICE.**

**I**N THE 1980s, both on and off the diamond, baseball captured the country's collective imagination time and again. The 1986 postseason was packed with thrilling, late-inning drama. Two years later, Kirk Gibson drove fans to the edge of their seats with a homer for the ages. And viewers around the world sat riveted as an earthquake rocked the 1989 World Series in northern California.

It also was the decade when four memorable baseball movies — *The Natural*, *Bull Durham*, *Field of Dreams* and *Major League* — hit theaters.

The first to debut was *The Natural* in 1984. Starring Robert Redford, the film tells the story of Roy Hobbs, a 34-year-old slugger who comes out of retirement to lead a team to the top. The movie is based on Bernard Malamud's novel of the same name, published in 1952.

Malamud's story is a modern twist on the mythology of medieval Europe. The main character is named Roy, a play on the French word for king, and the team he joins is called the Knights. The bat Hobbs uses, which he names "Wonder Boy," seems to have a mysterious power, allowing Hobbs to shatter lights and shred baseballs with mere swings. It is such wonder that made the story so appealing.

Telling an entirely different type of tale, *Bull Durham*, starring Kevin Costner as career Minor Leaguer Crash Davis, opened four years later, in 1988. The story focused on a season with an often hapless Single-A Durham Bulls team and its most ardent fan, played by Susan Sarandon. The film was written and directed by Ron Shelton, who based it on his experience as a Minor League second baseman in the Orioles' system.

"What's funny," Shelton once told *The New York Times*, "is that a lot of stuff [in the movie] that critics said was unrealistic about *Bull Durham* was precisely what was most realistic. In those timeouts on the pitcher's mound, we'd take time to argue about who was going to win the welterweight championship fight or what was the best steakhouse in the town we were playing in or what to get somebody for a wedding present."

The same realism could not be found in *Field of Dreams*, which opened the following year and featured a host of deceased former Major Leaguers emerging from the edge of an Iowa cornfield to play pick-up baseball.

Also starring Kevin Costner, the film — based on the book *Shoeless Joe* by W.P. Kinsella — so poetically captured the nation's passion for the purity of the game. "The one constant through all the years, Ray, has been baseball," says Terence Mann, played by James Earl Jones, during the movie's climax. "America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It has been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt and erased again. But baseball has marked the time. This field, this game: It's a part of our past, Ray. It reminds us of all that once was good ... and it could be again."

And then there was *Major League*, which also opened in 1989, but was in no way poetic. The film followed a Cleveland Indians team full of has-beens

and never-weres that, despite being built to lose by its owner, was determined to succeed. Like the other great baseball movies of the 1980s, it brought fans a host of memorable moments, which delighted audiences and have held a firm place in American culture through the years.



◆ RELEASED IN 1989, *FIELD OF DREAMS* CAPTURES THE BEAUTY OF BASEBALL THROUGH THE EYES OF A CORN FARMER FROM IOWA.



◆ HAVING PASSED TY COBB TO BECOME THE GAME'S ALL-TIME LEADER IN HITS, PETE ROSE CELEBRATES. HE ALSO WAS THE REDS' MANAGER FROM 1984-89.



**“He has a desire that burns inside him,” Boston catcher Rich Gedman told *USA Weekend* of Clemens, “to be the best pitcher in baseball.”**

◆ OREL HERSHISER’S JERSEY FROM THE 1988 FALL CLASSIC, WHEN HE WON TWO GAMES AGAINST OAKLAND.



On the field at the time, many all-time greats were making their mark on baseball, as well. In 1985, Pete Rose was the player-manager of the Reds, playing in his 23rd of 24 seasons as a Big League hitting machine.

By September, Rose, nicknamed “Charlie Hustle” for his trademark grit between the lines, was second on baseball’s all-time hit list and looking to pass Ty Cobb’s record of 4,191. Cobb’s mark had stood untouched for 57 years, and as *The New York Times* described at the time, “had seemed so unsailable.”

The confident Rose never was worried. “There’s no pressure on me,” he told *The Times* before the 1985 season. “It’s just a matter of time.”

Perhaps some of his swagger came from past success. Like Hank Aaron’s home run pursuit years before, Rose’s career-long hit parade had been remarkably consistent. Ten times he had crossed the vaunted 200-hit mark in a season, and he led the league in that category seven times.

Although he played only 119 games in 1985, Rose got just enough trips to the plate to put Cobb in his rearview mirror. The final blow came on September 11 in Cincinnati off of Padres hurler Eric Show, cementing Rose’s status among the best hitters ever.

As Rose’s career was winding to a close in the mid-1980s, one of the best pitchers of all time was just getting things started. Roger Clemens made his debut with the Red Sox in 1984 and promptly made his presence felt. He went 9-4 as a 21-year-old rookie, and two years later, he went 24-4

**CLEVELAND AT BOSTON (D)**  
Scattering nine hits, Nipper recorded his first major league complete game in pitching Red Sox to 3-1 victory over Indians. Sox scored in third inning on three-run homer by Rice, his 39th of season. Yastrzemski played his last game, going 1-for-3, and left to standing ovation after popping out in seventh inning. Boggs finished season at .361 to win A.L. batting championship.

Cleveland	ab	r	h	rbt	Boston	ab	r	h	rbt
Perconte, 2b	2	0	1	0	Remy, 2b	4	1	3	0
Harris, 3b	5	0	1	0	Boggs, 3b	1	1	0	0
Hargrove, 1b	4	0	2	0	Rice, dh	4	1	2	3
Thornton, dh	4	0	0	0	Armas, cf	2	0	0	0
Vukovich, cf	4	0	1	0	Graham, cf	2	0	0	0
Bumster, rf	3	1	0	0	Walker, lf	3	0	1	0
Castillo, rf	0	0	0	0	Nichols, rf	2	0	0	0
Rhouberg, lf	4	0	3	0	Stapleton, 1b	3	0	0	0
Evans, c	2	0	1	1	Allen, c	3	0	0	0
Bando, ph-c	2	0	0	0	Gutierrez, ss	3	0	0	0
Fischlin, ss	2	0	0	0					
Perkins, ph	1	0	0	0					
<b>Totals</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>

Cleveland	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Anderson (L 1-6)	3	4	3	3	3	9
Bremner	1	0	0	0	1	1
Jeffcoat	1	2	0	0	3	1
Spilner	2	0	0	0	2	0



◆ LEFT: PART OF THE BOX SCORE FROM CARL YASTRZEMSKI’S FINAL GAME, OCTOBER 2, 1983. ABOVE: ROGER CLEMENS EMERGED FOR BOSTON IN THE MID-1980s, THE BEGINNING OF A LEGENDARY CAREER. ON APRIL 29, 1986, HIS VAUNTED HEATER IN TOW, CLEMENS SET A MAJOR LEAGUE RECORD BY WHIFFING 20 MARINERS.

## ENCLOSURES

An excerpt from the script of *Field of Dreams*. The scorecards from Game 1 of the 1988 World Series, won by Kirk Gibson on a walk-off.

and won the AL Cy Young and MVP awards. “I strive for perfection,” Clemens once said to *USA Weekend*. “Sometimes when I’m almost perfect, it’s not enough for me.”

## Statman

Armed with stacks of box scores and an innate ability with numbers, writer Bill James (right) has changed the game of baseball. It began in 1977, when the Kansas native and lifelong baseball fan self-published a 68-page *Baseball Abstract*, which people could order from James himself through ads placed in other publications. By 1982, the popularity of the work had earned James a deal with Ballantine Books.

Never one to take accepted norms as reality, James made waves with his use of statistics to investigate the game. He argued, for example, that making outs should be avoided in all cases, meaning sacrifice bunts cost more than they’re worth. And, as a result, he trumped up the value of the walk, as it is the only play a batter can make that is completely outproof. Today, James’ evaluations play a major role in the way people analyze the game.





# INFIELDERS

**OZZIE SMITH and CAL RIPKEN** showed that elite shortstops come in all sizes.

**A**LTHOUGH THE MODERN-DAY surge in stat-keeping has helped, it never has been easy to measure defense. While a legendary infielder may have posted a historically high fielding percentage, that doesn't necessarily reflect his ability to cover lots of ground, read balls off the bat and turn potential hits into outs.

Ozzie Smith posted an impressive fielding percentage throughout his career, leading National League shortstops in the category seven times in his 19 years. But to understand what earned Smith the nickname "The Wizard" and what made him a Hall of Famer, one had to watch him play. Because to see him dive into the hole and adjust for a bad hop in midair, as he did as a Padres rookie in 1978, was to believe that he was the best of all time.

"I think of myself as an artist on the field," he once said. "Every game I look for a chance to do something that the fans have never seen before."

And very often, he did just that.

Despite starring in both basketball and baseball at Locke High School in Los Angeles, Smith didn't attract much attention from college recruiters or professional scouts as a young ballplayer. At 5 foot 11, 150 pounds, he was considered too small to make an impact.

"That hurt," Smith told *Boys' Life* in 1984. "I knew I had talent but they wouldn't give me a chance. The scouts had this fixation about size and they crossed me off."

After Smith spent four years as a star shortstop at Cal Poly, opinions around the Big Leagues began to change. The Padres selected him in the fourth round of the 1977 Draft and sent him to the team's Single-A affiliate in Walla Walla, Wash.

By 1978, Smith was San Diego's starting shortstop and his rise to Big League greatness was underway. He would spend four seasons in Southern California, winning his first two Gold Gloves in his final two years there. He went on to win 13 during his career.

In December 1981, a trade sent Smith from his home state to Missouri to join the Cardinals. Although leaving the comforts of his native West Coast was a tough pill to swallow, "The Wizard" saw that St. Louis had a chance to contend on a regular basis and he accepted the move.

He was right, at least early on, as the Cards won the World Series in Smith's first year on the team (1982). With Smith covering the hole, they would reach two other Fall Classics in the 1980s — in '85 and '87.



◆ ABOVE: CAL RIPKEN WAS KNOWN FOR HIS LONG AUTOGRAPH SESSIONS AFTER GAMES. HIS RAPPORT WITH THE FANS TOOK CENTER STAGE WHEN HE BROKE LOU GEHRIG'S RECORD FOR CONSECUTIVE GAMES PLAYED, AS HE TOOK A LAP AROUND THE FIELD TO CELEBRATE WITH THEM. RIGHT: OZZIE SMITH SHOWS OFF HIS ACROBATIC ABILITY.

"I think his ability rubs off on everybody defensively," teammate and double-play partner Tommy Herr told *Boys' Life* in 1984. "You want to do your best out there just so you won't look bad compared to him."

Offensively, Smith never was much of a power threat, but his batting average steadily improved throughout his career. He hit .303 in 1987, and topped .280 four more times after that. And the same speed that served him well in the field allowed Smith to steal bases by the handful (580 for his career).

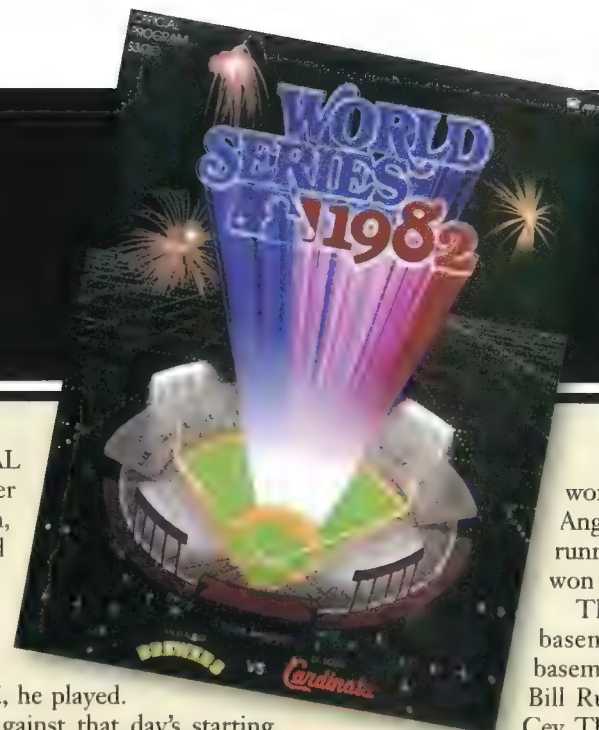
But Smith forever will be known for his work with the leather. "He's the most amazing guy I've ever seen," his long-time manager in St. Louis, Whitey Herzog, once told the *Orlando Sentinel*.

While Smith was on the small side for a Major League shortstop, Cal Ripken was large — around 6 foot 4 and 225 pounds. After a brief stay with the Orioles in 1981, Ripken earned a regular spot in the Bigs the following season, splitting time between third base and short. At first, he made noise with his powerful bat, slamming 28





◆ DAVEY LOPES (FAR LEFT) AND RON CEY WERE HALF OF THE INFIELD IN L.A. FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. THEY WON A CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1981.



◆ THE WORLD SERIES PROGRAM COVER FROM 1982, OZZIE SMITH'S ONLY TITLE SEASON. IT ALSO WAS HIS FIRST YEAR AS A CARDINAL.



home runs and winning the AL Rookie of the Year Award. Over time though, Ripken, like Smith, would come to be appreciated for a number of different reasons.

There was his resiliency. It never seemed to matter if Ripken was banged up. He played. Even if Ripken felt tired, he played. If he had a bad track record against that day's starting pitcher, Ripken suited up. And before long, Lou Gehrig's consecutive-games-played streak, which had seemed untouchable for decades, was within Ripken's sights. On September 6, 1995, thanks to his tremendous dedication to his craft and a lot of luck in avoiding serious injury, Ripken passed Gehrig, playing in his 2,131st consecutive game.

Ripken's defense was also worth noting. He made just three errors at shortstop in 1990 (an incredibly low figure for someone playing such a busy position), but lost out in the race for the Gold Glove Award to Chicago's Ozzie Guillen. Ripken did manage to win the next two, though.

There also was his grace with the fans. Ripken became notorious for long autograph sessions after games. He would hang around signing baseballs and scorebooks until the last fan left smiling. "I just wanted to give a little back to fans who have always been very kind to me," he said after one such session during his final season.

And, of course, there was his loyalty to his team. Few players are as identifiable with one franchise as Ripken, a 2007 Hall of Fame inductee, is with the Orioles. He spent all 21 years of his Major League career in Baltimore. It wasn't so easy in 1988, after the O's let go of his father, Cal Sr., who had been the manager. "It wasn't right," Ripken Jr. says, "not after all he had given to the organization, and my pride as an Oriole was hurt." But after being convinced that Baltimore was committed to rebuilding the team as a winner, Cal Jr. decided to stay put. He would retire as a Baltimore legend after another 13 seasons.

**"Sometimes," Cardinals Manager Whitey Herzog told the *Orlando Sentinel* in 1985 of Smith's defense, "it looks like the Harlem Globetrotters out there."**

Longevity also was the buzzword in the early 1980s in Los Angeles, where the game's longest-running infield combination finally won the World Series.

The group consisted of first baseman Steve Garvey, second baseman Davey Lopes, shortstop Bill Russell and third baseman Ron Cey. The first time that they all started on the infield for the Dodgers was on June 23, 1973, against Cincinnati. It would prove to be a magical combination for the franchise. Los Angeles kept all four in place for the next eight seasons, reaching three Fall Classics in the 1970s before they finally brought the trophy home to Southern California in 1981.

All were sharp players. Lopes, who worked as a schoolteacher before he became a Big Leaguer, was recognized for his leadership abilities early in his career. Los Angeles skipper Tommy Lasorda made him the franchise's captain in the spring of 1978. Lopes, who had moved from the outfield,

had tremendous speed at second and he developed a bit of power at the plate over time, as well.

Garvey was never imposing in stature, but he could rake at the plate. The 1974 National League MVP would finish his career with a .294 average.

Russell, who would go on to manage the Dodgers briefly in the 1990s, didn't hit for much power himself. He always was clutch, though.

And then there was Cey, who rarely got the attention he deserved from the baseball public. He was a solid hitter and defensive third baseman. A six-time All-Star, he earned the nickname "The Penguin" for his odd running style ("His running gait is a peculiar squat, almost as if he's moving only from the knees down," wrote Abby Mendelson in *Baseball Quarterly* in 1977). In the '81 World Series, Cey hit .350 and shared the MVP Award, as he and his longtime infield teammates finally won a ring.



# #1990s

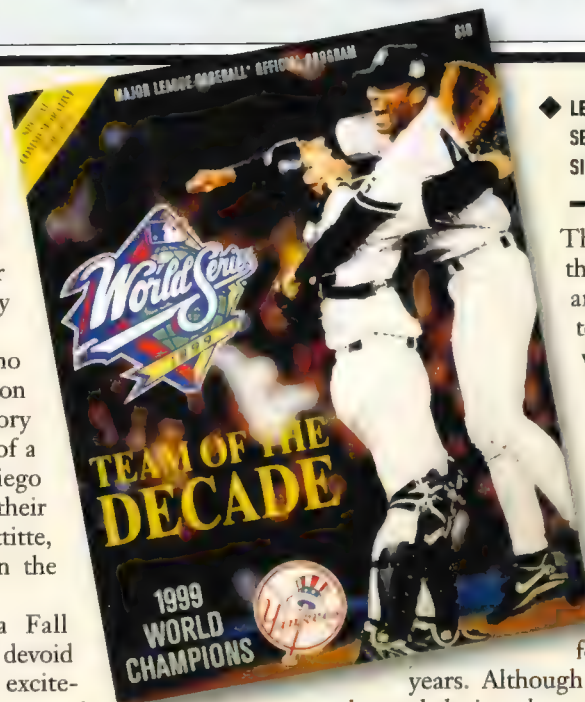
The Yankees and Braves quickly emerged as the **MOST DOMINANT FRANCHISES** of the decade.

**A**S GAME 4 of the 1998 World Series grew near, with the finish to the Series and the season seemingly imminent, future Hall of Famer Paul Molitor had a unique take on the way the World Series had gone.

The New York Yankees, who had dominated the regular season like few teams in baseball history (114-48), were on the verge of a sweep. They led the San Diego Padres, 3 games to none, and their clutch left-hander, Andy Pettitte, was set to toe the rubber in the fourth contest.

Instead of bemoaning a Fall Classic seemingly set to finish devoid of sixth- or seventh-game excitement, Molitor told *Sports Illustrated* that a sweep truly was the appropriate way for the year to end. "Rather than having a tight World Series, it's perfect to have it end with this great Yankee team sweeping," he remarked. "What better exclamation point could you have to this season?"

It was an appropriate finale because the Bronx Bombers had dominated the opening acts in every way imaginable. They won the AL East by 22 games over Boston. They led the league in runs scored and fewest runs allowed. They walked more and struck out less than just about everyone.



◆ LEFT: A COMMEMORATIVE EDITION OF THE 1999 WORLD SERIES PROGRAM. RIGHT: THE YANKS CELEBRATE A SIMILARLY DOMINANT WIN OVER SAN DIEGO IN 1998.

They could beat you with speed on the bases and defense, with pitching and with power. All that mattered to them was that they *did* beat you, which they did more than 70 percent of the time on the season.

"I don't think they have a weakness," Padres General Manager Kevin Towers told *Sports Illustrated*.

The 1998 charge was the midpoint of a largely fruitful stretch of postseasons for New York, led by skipper Joe Torre, in which they won an impressive four World Series titles in five years. Although many of the faces on the fringe changed during those seasons, the Yankees' core of big-game players, like Pettitte, Derek Jeter, Bernie Williams and Mariano Rivera, remained a constant.

The first title of the stretch for New York came in 1996, when the Yankees topped the Atlanta Braves in six games. As it would turn out, it was a meeting of the decade's two most dominant franchises.

Atlanta, led by its dynamic pitching trio of Greg Maddux, John Smoltz and Tom Glavine, was fresh off of its own World Series crown in 1995. But the Braves' true success throughout the '90s came during the regular season,



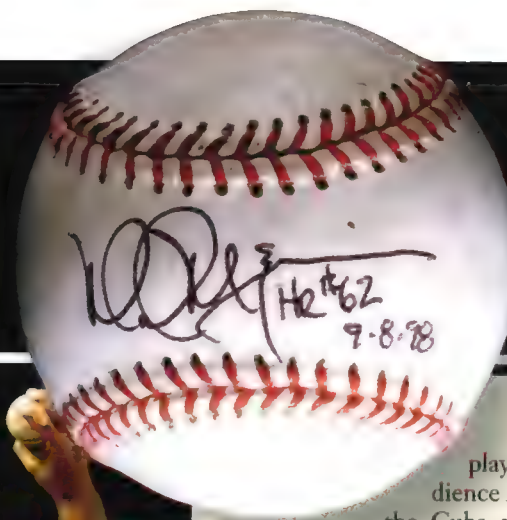
## Big Changes

Mets vs. Yankees. Cubs vs. White Sox. Angels vs. Dodgers. Once reserved for Spring Training and the World Series, these intra-city matchups became an annual part of the regular-season schedule, with the introduction of Interleague Play in 1997. Bragging rights for local fans finally were settled on the diamond.

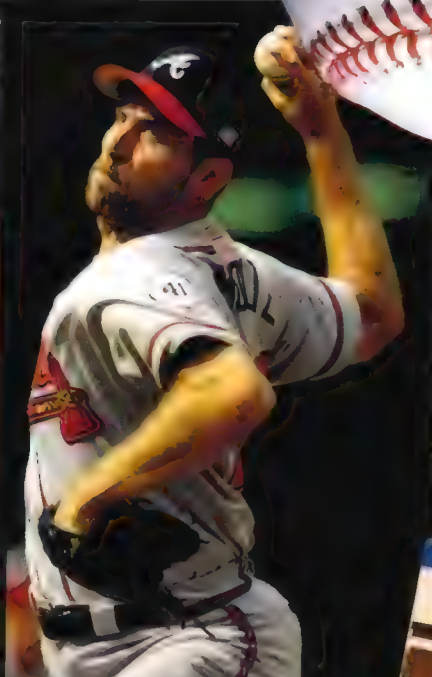
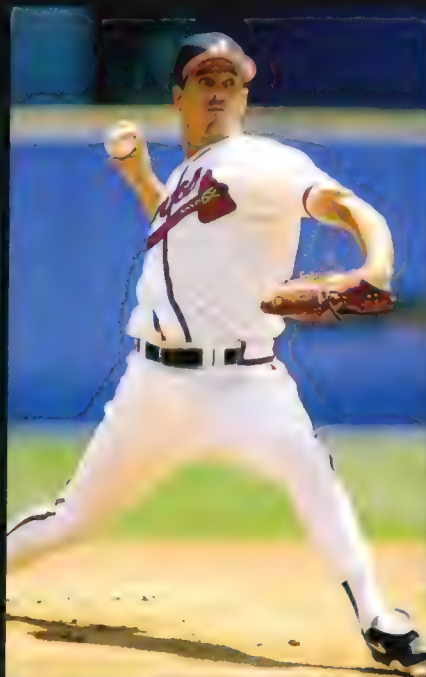
Another change during the decade under Commissioner Bud Selig was splitting each league into three divisions, and along with that change, the addition of the Wild Card, which debuted in 1995. The winners of each league's three divisions now were joined in the first round of the playoffs by the team with the next best record. In 1997, the Marlins, one of four teams to join the Majors in the 1990s (with Arizona, Tampa Bay and Colorado), became the first Wild Card team to win a World Series.



**“They know they’re good,” Joe Torre told *Sports Illustrated* during the run by his 1998 Yankees, “but they don’t have to flaunt it.”**



◆ THE BALL HIT BY MARK MCGWIRE FOR HOMER NO. 62, BREAKING THE SINGLE-SEASON RECORD. SAMMY SOSA JOINED HIM FIVE DAYS LATER.



◆ FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: GREG MADDUX, TOM GLAVINE AND JOHN SMOLTZ WERE KEY COGS FOR ATLANTA DURING ITS ASTONISHING RUN OF REGULAR-SEASON SUCCESS. EACH WON AT LEAST ONE CY YOUNG AWARD, LED BY MADDUX'S FOUR (1992 TO '95). GLAVINE WON TWO GAMES IN THE '95 SERIES, WHEN THE BRAVES WON IT ALL.

when they dominated their division. Beginning in 1991, Atlanta won 14 straight division titles, a remarkable streak in the free agency era, when it's hard to keep a successful bunch of ballplayers together for any significant number of years.

“They may not win it all,” Atlanta fan and author Rick Bragg wrote in *GQ* in 2001, “but they will by God win the majority of the time, and what else in this sorry ol’ world is as reliable as that?”

When the Braves’ run began, Terry Pendleton was the National League MVP and Atlanta was in the NL West. As the franchise wrapped up the 2005 division title, its 14th straight, Pendleton was in his fourth season as the team’s hitting coach and the Braves had been members of the NL East for 12 years.

The two key constants through it all were Manager Bobby Cox and GM John Schuerholz.



◆ ABOVE: A YANKEES PIN FROM THE 2000 SERIES, THE TEAM'S FOURTH IN FIVE YEARS. RIGHT: A TICKET STUB FROM THE '95 SERIES, WON BY THE BRAVES IN SIX GAMES.

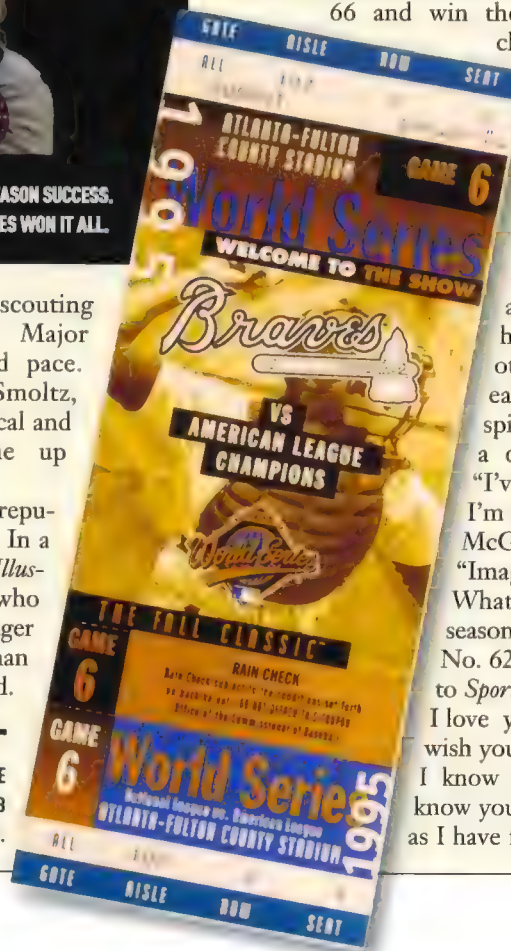
Schuerholz developed a scouting system that churned out Major League talent at a torrid pace. Names like Glavine, Smoltz, Chipper Jones, Rafael Furcal and Andruw Jones all came up through the Braves’ ranks.

Meanwhile, Cox built a reputation as a player’s manager. In a 2006 poll conducted by *Sports Illustrated*, 30 percent of the players who participated chose Cox as the best manager in baseball, 12 percentage points better than the next on the list, Detroit’s Jim Leyland.

On an individual level, no two players captivated the baseball audience in the 1990s like Sammy Sosa of the Cubs and Mark McGwire of the St. Louis Cardinals in the summer of 1998. For fans disillusioned by the strike of '94, which had caused the season to be cut short and the World Series to be canceled, the historic power surge by the two sluggers was reason enough to begin watching the game once again.

Entering 1998, baseball’s single-season home run king remained Roger Maris, who had belted 61 longballs in 1961. As the 1998 season heated up, it became clear that Sosa and McGwire had a shot to break the 37-year-old record. “Why can’t he?” asked *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist Jay Mariotti about Sosa at the end of June. As it turned out, he could, and so could McGwire. Sosa would finish with 66 and win the NL MVP, while McGwire chugged all the way to 70.

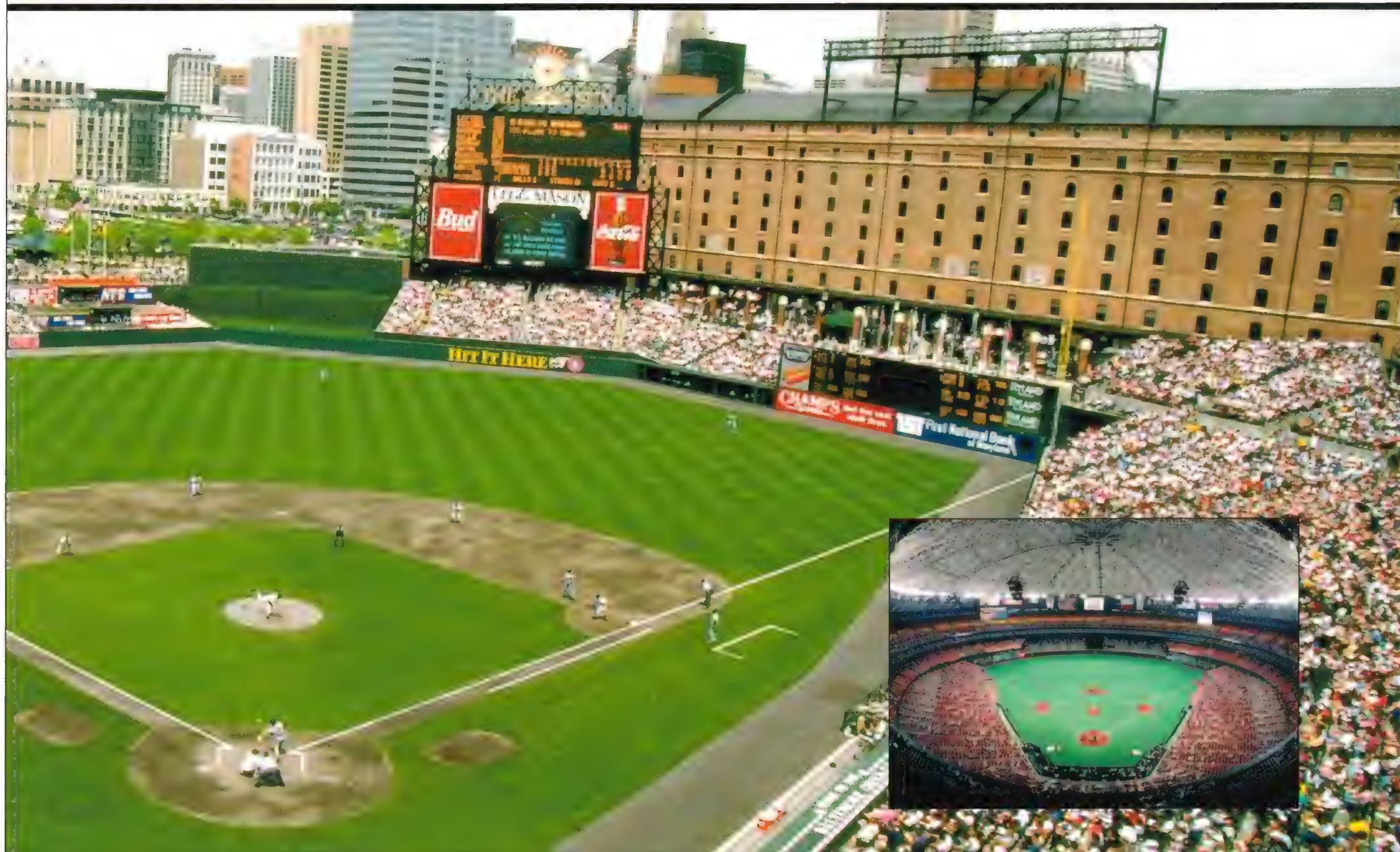
Perhaps what gripped the nation most about the home run race was the way that the two sluggers related to each other throughout what became a pressure-packed campaign. Sosa, a native of the Dominican Republic, and McGwire, from California, high-fived and rooted each other on, as if they had known each other their whole lives. The spirit that they showed was worth a celebration in its own right. “I’ve said a thousand times that I’m not competing against [Sosa],” McGwire said to *Sports Illustrated*. “Imagine if we’re tied at the end. What a beautiful way to end the season.” Remarked Sosa, after hitting No. 62 against Milwaukee, according to *Sports Illustrated*: “Mark, you know I love you. It’s been unbelievable. I wish you could be here with me today. I know you are watching me, and I know you have the same feeling for me as I have for you in my heart.”





# BALLPARKS

Starting with Camden Yards, MODERN-DAY STADIUM DESIGN took a turn for the ages.



◆ THE DESIGN FOR ORIOLE PARK AT CAMDEN YARDS (ABOVE) WAS A TURNING POINT IN BALLPARK CONSTRUCTION. IT WAS A SHIFT AWAY FROM FUTURISTIC COOKIE CUTTERS, LIKE THE HOUSTON ASTRODOME (INSET), WHICH WERE NO LONGER SEEN AS THE IDEAL PLACES TO WATCH BASEBALL. INSTEAD, CLUBS BEGAN TO SEEK WAYS TO SLIDE THEIR NEW HOMES IN WITH THE SURROUNDING URBAN ENVIRONMENT. UNIQUE FEATURES, LIKE THE WAREHOUSE BEYOND THE WALL AT CAMDEN YARDS, HELPED ACHIEVE SUCH A RESULT.



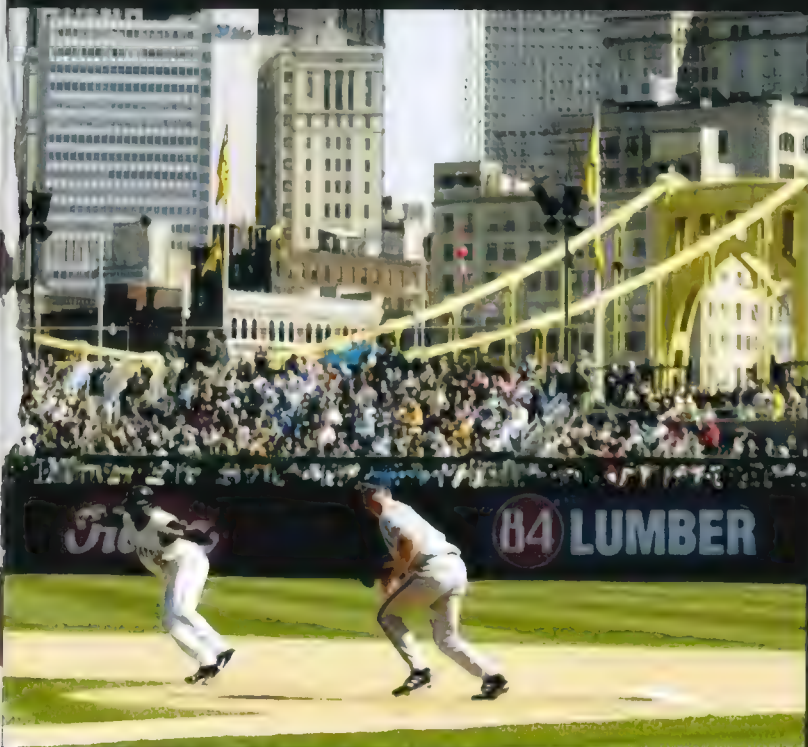
“Particularly in the case of baseball,” says Janet Marie Smith, a ballpark designer, “there has been an effort to fit into the urban context rather than to disrupt it.”



◆ THE DESIGN FOR THE NEW NATIONALS HOME DOESN'T HAVE THE SAME RETRO FEEL AS MANY PARKS, BUT IT DOES REFLECT THE CAMDEN YARDS MODEL.



◆ ABOVE: CLEVELAND'S JACOBS FIELD OPENED IN 1994 AS PART OF THE NEW WAVE.  
BELOW: THE VIEW OF PITTSBURGH BEYOND THE WALL AT PNC PARK IS STUNNING.



THE 2006 ALL-STAR Game was played at Pittsburgh's PNC Park, showcasing both the game's brightest talents and one of its newest gems. For many around the country, it was likely a formal introduction to the Pirates' new home field. Finally, they got to see what local fans and people around the game have been seeing from day one: a beautiful, exciting venue, in line with many of the other modern baseball constructions.

In a city raised around waterways, PNC was constructed appropriately on the shore of the Allegheny River. The Roberto Clemente Bridge beyond the center-field wall connects the stadium area with the downtown centers across the water. From home plate, its yellow beams are visible over the outfield fence, as is the city skyline.

"The Pirates' new home could not have been more perfectly executed," wrote Thomas Boswell in *The Washington Post* during All-Star week, saying that the Nationals, in designing their home, should follow suit.

The stadium is part of the recent wave of modern throwbacks. These new homes are unlike the cookie-cutter parks built in the 1960s and '70s, which were concrete, multipurpose and built with an eye toward the future. Shea Stadium, for example, opened in 1964 in a lot adjacent to the World's Fair. Houston's Astrodome, which opened the next year and was dubbed the "eighth wonder of the world," was a veritable love letter to the space age. Strange as it may seem now, back then people lauded the possibilities of a world that could produce feats like AstroTurf and stadium seats that could be reconfigured for several sports.

The stadiums weren't fit snugly into surrounding streets, a la older venues like Fenway Park or Wrigley Field (the latter of which didn't even have lights until 1988); they were situated near highways and cased by thousands of parking spots. It seemed everyone had them, and anyone who didn't wanted one. "We went through a phase where multipurpose was presumed to solve all sorts of problems," says Janet Marie Smith, a renowned architect of ballparks. "Now, they are considered multipurpose-less ballparks, because they don't conform to a baseball or football ideal."

The new parks are for baseball only. For the most part, they're open beyond center field, and the architects have sought to mesh their design with the surrounding city.

Oriole Park at Camden Yards was the trendsetter; a red-brick masterpiece that's credited with sticking a cork in the cookie-cutter era. Since Camden opened in 1992,

15 other franchises have tried to replicate its marvelous qualities, opening baseball-only parks that paid homage to the jewels of past eras.

"We were looking to do something that was real for that site," says Smith, who designed Camden Yards, "but whose lessons were grounded in the ballparks of the early '20s, not the ones of the 1960s."

Smith, who moved on to work on maintaining the sustainability of Fenway Park, points to a number of decisions early in the process that helped shape the Baltimore design.

The first came from Governor William Donald Schaefer, who was determined to keep the Orioles in Baltimore, having watched the NFL's Colts depart in 1983. "There were a number of sites that were studied, five or six," Smith recalls, "but the governor said, 'Look, if we're going to do it, we're going to do it right in the middle of the city.'" That way, he argued, it would take advantage of the existing transportation and parking available nearby.

Also, there was the vision of Larry Lucchino, who was then the president of the O's, who viewed the Orioles' new home as a ballpark and not a stadium, meaning it would be for baseball only. He wanted it to hearken back to the parks of old and to be a part of the Baltimore neighborhood.

Interestingly, though, Smith never remembers him using the term "retro," even if that has become the buzzword in the world of park construction since Oriole Park opened. Rather, the goal was to make a distinguished and fitting home for the team and the city. "It was going to be part of the neighborhood, not something existing just to put baseball there," Smith says. "Its architecture and quirks would not be born out of something cartoonish, mimicking what was, but it would be what the site lent itself to."

The warehouse beyond the right-field wall was a good place to begin. Built between 1898 and 1905, the B&O Warehouse, the longest building on the East Coast (1,016 feet) was once used by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company. Now, thanks to Smith's design, it looms over the hitter at Orioles games, just 439 feet away from the plate. It gained fame soon after opening, when it held the signs posting the consecutive games count for Cal Ripken Jr.

The new parks that followed, in places like Cleveland, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, often sought to mimic the Maryland design, not in building a warehouse of their own, but in seeking an original way to meld into the area. The result is a host of fields well worth showcasing.



# RELIEF PITCHERS

Facing new lows as a starter, Dennis Eckersley **TURNED TO THE BULLPEN** and dominated.

**I**N THE WINTER following the 1986 season, pitcher Dennis Eckersley was at a crossroads in his life. He had just posted a 6-11 record for the Cubs and had the second-highest ERA of his career (4.57). His future seemed hazy. Off the field, Eckersley was battling a problem with alcohol. According to *People* magazine, on January 5, 1987, he checked into a rehab facility named Edgehill Newport in Rhode Island. "The toughest thing I've ever done in my life is walk through those doors," he told the magazine. "I know it was a blessing. But at the time, I felt defeated."

He was not. Eckersley was able to overcome his problem with alcohol. "I'm not a special person," he said. "But I'm proof that you *can* beat alcohol." And an April trade sent him to the Oakland A's (near his native Fremont, Calif.), where Manager Tony La Russa and pitching coach Dave Duncan would give him new life as a closer.

At first, Eckersley was resistant to the idea of moving to the bullpen. "I was leaving the Cubs and going to the Bay Area; I was excited about that," Eckersley told the *Oakland Tribune*. "But I wasn't real excited about going to the bullpen, because I wasn't going to the bullpen to be a star. I was going out there to hang around and clean up." His old teammate, Rick Honeycutt, also suggested to the newspaper that Eckersley was fearful of letting the team down pitching in such tight spots. "I think that's what I respected most," Honeycutt said. "He just had this unbelievable fear of failure."

Eckersley learned to channel his fear into bravado on the mound. He carried himself with a swagger, pumping his fist wildly for strikeouts. "Sometimes what gets you through paranoia is being real aggressive," he told the *Tribune*. "So I used to go after people."

It worked. In 1988, his second year in the bullpen, Eckersley logged 45 saves and posted a 2.35 ERA. In 1992, he won the Cy Young Award and the AL MVP. He had pinpoint control, using his slider and his fastball to embarrass hitters, and A's fans loved to watch him do it.

He also was a stand-up guy. Although Eckersley gave up one of the biggest home runs in the game's history, to Kirk Gibson in the 1988 World Series, he fielded all of the media's questions after the game. If he could accept the praise that had come during the season and in the ALCS, he reasoned, how could he not sit in and face the heat when things went the other way?

All of it made him a prime candidate for the Hall of Fame when the time came. In 2004, he was inducted, fittingly, as one of the first closers ever to be offered a plaque in Cooperstown.

Trevor Hoffman, who became the game's all-time saves leader in 2006, may join him there some day down the road. On September 24, the Padres hurler saved his 479th contest to pass Lee Smith. A mainstay in the All-Star Game, Hoffman led the NL in saves in 2006 (46), the second time in his career he accomplished the feat.



◆ DENNIS ECKERSLEY WON THE CY YOUNG AND MVP AWARDS IN THE AL IN 1992 WHEN HE POSTED A STELLAR 1.91 ERA AND TALLIED A CAREER-BEST 51 SAVES.



## Perfect Relief

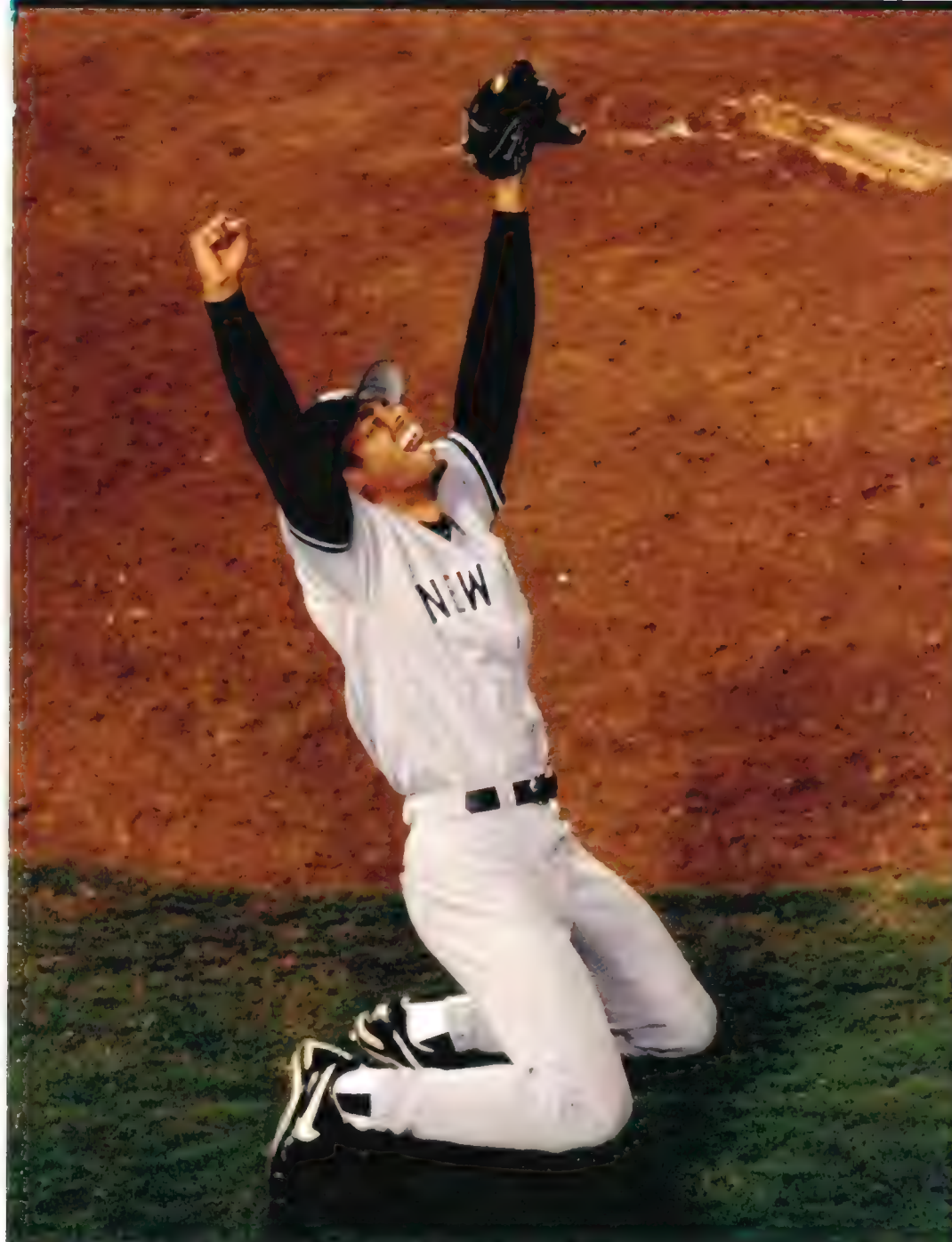
Decades after it happened, ex-pitcher Ernie Shore (pictured left with Babe Ruth), by then the sheriff of Forsyth County in North Carolina, was happy to tell the story of the greatest outing of his life. "I've been asked to tell it a thousand times and I hope I get asked a thousand more," he told a reporter from the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1961.

That's because in 1917, in the days when a complete game from the starting pitcher was a lot more common, Shore delivered the most efficient relief appearance in Major League history. The Red Sox's starter, Ruth, had been tossed from the contest for arguing with the umpire about a walk to the first batter of the game. Shore was brought in to pitch while another teammate warmed up. But no one else would be needed. The runner on first was promptly thrown out at second trying to steal, and Shore retired the next 26 Washington hitters for his own version of a perfect game.



“It was like magic,” Dennis Eckersley told the *Oakland Tribune* of his success as the Athletics’ closer. “It’s like I was walking on water.”

◆ A JERSEY WORN BY RELIEVER ROLLIE FINGERS IN OAKLAND, WHERE HE HAD GREAT SUCCESS.



Through 12 seasons with the Yankees, Mariano Rivera didn’t have as many saves as Hoffman or years in the league. But he was widely considered on the same level of bullpen elite, having established a reputation for bearing down in the most pressurized of situations. “I don’t think you can trust anybody more than Mariano,” says his longtime manager, Joe Torre. In 1999, when Rivera was named the World Series MVP, he appeared in eight playoff games, allowing no runs and notching six saves.

There was a time when Rivera took a back seat in New York’s bullpen hierarchy. In 1996, when the team won its first Fall Classic of the decade, John Wetteland was the closer. Rivera was used as the setup man, holding down the eighth. But when Wetteland left for Texas the following offseason, the Yankees felt that the Panamanian right-hander was ready for his shot.

They knew he had the stuff. “Because he’s small and because his delivery is so free and easy, so smooth,” his former catcher, Joe Girardi, once told *Sports Illustrated*, “his stuff doesn’t look as if it’s coming at you. Then it’s by you.” Rivera’s trademark pitch is his cut fastball. Hitters know it’s coming (Rivera won’t let them beat him on his secondary stuff), but they can’t seem to hit it.

Rivera also proved he could handle the pressure. “He’s been the one factor that’s separated my teams from all the others,” Torre says. “He’s so good, you have to remind yourself not to take him for granted.”

While Rivera has dominated recent postseasons, no closer has had a showing in the regular season like Eric Gagne a few years back. From late August of 2002 to July 2004, the Dodgers reliever posted a record 84 consecutive saves. He also won the 2003 National League Cy Young Award, a year in which he averaged 14.98 Ks per nine innings, the highest ever. “The punchouts are phenomenal,” Eckersley told the *Boston Globe* of Gagne that year. “Maybe I could have matched the hits, but nobody gets those kind of punchouts.”

“The mentality for me,” Gagne once told the *Boston Globe*, “is all out for one inning.” So often in the life of a closer these days, that one inning can mean an awful lot.

◆ CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: MARIANO RIVERA, AS THE YANKEES’ CLOSER, HAS BEEN CLUTCH IN THE POSTSEASON. THE DODGERS’ ERIC GAGNE ONCE OWNED THE REGULAR SEASON. TREVOR HOFFMAN BECAME THE ALL-TIME SAVES LEADER IN 2006.



# EQUIPMENT

When it comes to their **BATS AND GLOVES**, Big Leaguers display some odd behavior.

**B**Y ALL ACCOUNTS, Tony Gwynn could have hit .300 swinging a pool cue during his playing days. The California native won eight batting titles in his 20-year career with the Padres, including four in the 1990s, and finished with a .338 career average.

Yet, when it came to choosing his bat, Gwynn was very particular. In 1994, he found one that fit his liking — a nine-grain piece of lumber that he nicknamed “the nine grains of pain.” The pain was inflicted on opposing pitchers, who had great trouble putting the outfielder away when Gwynn had that particular bat in his grasp. He hit .394 during the strike-shortened season.

When Gwynn’s beloved bat broke apart the following spring while he was working against Padres coach Rob Picciolo, Gwynn taped his broken friend back together again and cleared a spot in his trophy case.

In a sport increasingly impacted by science and statistics over the past few decades, tales like that of Gwynn and his bat are still common. Major Leaguers often rely on feel to pick their equipment (bats and gloves especially), and when they find something they like, their attachment to it can become almost scary.

The most notorious case of the last 20 years might be that of former shortstop Walt Weiss and his glove, dubbed “The Creature.” He played with it for 12 seasons in the Bigs, and by the end, fishing line was required to keep the clump of leather functional.

Weiss’s former teammate, Mike Bordick, came up with the nickname when he found the dingy mitt sitting a bit too close to his locker. “Get that creature away from me,” he declared, to the amusement of all, while flinging the glove away with a bat. The moniker stuck.

There were times when it looked like “The Creature” was done. Just minutes prior to Game 3 of the 1999 World Series, Weiss and fellow Brave Chipper Jones were playing catch in front of the dugout when disaster struck. “Chipper throws the ball and the glove blows up,” recalls Weiss. “The thumb just dropped off. I panicked. I hadn’t

used a different glove in 10 years and there was no way I was going out [with a new one] in Game 3 of the World Series. The trainer put the defibrillator on it, tying it together with leather. It wasn’t comfortable, but there was no way I was going out there without it.”

“Gloves are a very, very valuable possession,” says veteran coach Rich Donnelly. “When you are talking about things most important to some [players], with many it’s kids, glove and wife — in that order.”

Former Oakland Athletics infielder Mike Gallego showed his loyalty to his glove during the 1989 World Series, when an earthquake shook Candlestick Park in San Francisco. As the stadium swayed and fans began to flee,

Gallego rushed to the clubhouse with teammates. The lights in the room went out, and the players began to head for the exit. But Gallego soon was struck with a sick feeling. Panicked, he crawled on his hands and knees through the disheveled room, looking for his glove.

“I wasn’t leaving without it,” he says. “Not a chance.”

Personal bats and gloves go everywhere with a player and the most loyal hit-makers and hit-stealers often get the royal treatment. According to *Seattle Times* writer Larry Stone, Hall of Famer Kirby Puckett used to call his collection of gloves “my babies.” Former outfielders Mel Hall and Brett Butler, writes Stone, each called their mitts “Lucille.” Meanwhile, Ichiro Suzuki’s bats come wrapped up in cellophane, according to Lee Jenkins of *The New York Times*, who calls the lumber “the most carefully handled bat in baseball.”

“I always have to be aware of where my glove is,” veteran third baseman Bill Mueller once admitted. “And on the road, I have to make sure something’s in it, like a Nerf ball, so it doesn’t get closed or folded.”

That’s because many players, like Mueller, form a shape to their glove over

**“Guys definitely can fall in love with their glove,” says Jack Wilson, who still keeps his glove from college at home. “You get attached to them.”**



◆ **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: WALT WEISS, MIKE GALLEGOS AND TONY GWYNN ALL ONCE DISPLAYED A UNIQUELY STRONG CONNECTION TO THEIR CHOSEN EQUIPMENT.**





◆ WHEN PROPERLY BROKEN IN, A GLOVE OFTEN WILL HAVE A NICE CURVATURE, PERFECT FOR A BASEBALL TO NEST IN.

## ENCLOSURE

*A copy of Hank Aaron's contract with Louisville Slugger. His signature was removed from the document so it could be branded into his bats.*

time. The gloves fit their hands perfectly and often have a nice curve in the leather where grounders and fly balls settle in softly. More recently, some players actually have turned to a flatter glove. "I like it that way because it gives me extra width and helps on the backhand," says shortstop Jack Wilson, a fine defensive contributor.

There also are a variety of bats available to players, and everyone has a different method for picking their weapon of choice. Joe Randa says his old Kansas City teammate, Neifi Perez, would line up his bats in the dugout and go from one to another depending on his mood. Others, like Mueller, base much of their choice on their health. If the third baseman has a sore wrist, or if he's tired from the summer heat, he might pick a lighter piece of lumber. "It just depends on the year and your feel and how things are going," he says.

Regardless of which is chosen, though, the key is getting comfortable with the equipment. The best way to break in a new mitt, according to infielder Jeff Cirillo, "is by taking a ton of ground balls." A catcher might head to the pitching machine to soften a new glove by using it to catch hundreds of fastballs.

And once it's broken in, a player's mitt is off-limits to others. It's an unwritten rule that one doesn't stick his hand in another's favorite piece of leather. "If someone puts his hand in your glove, it could ruin it. It can get stretched out," Donnelly says. "You know right away if someone has done it because it's like sticking your hand in cottage cheese."

With all of the love and care for equipment also comes blame. An error or a strikeout could be the end of the equipment's working life. Bats are often discarded in a slump, or in some instances, violently smashed over legs or even helmets. "There are times when I'll be struggling with mine and I'll pick up somebody else's and say, 'Oh my God, this feels great,'" says Steve Finley. Torii Hunter, the talented center fielder, has been known to microwave his glove as punishment for not making a catch. He calls it putting his glove in Hell.

It's all in a day's work for a Big Leaguer's favorite piece of equipment.

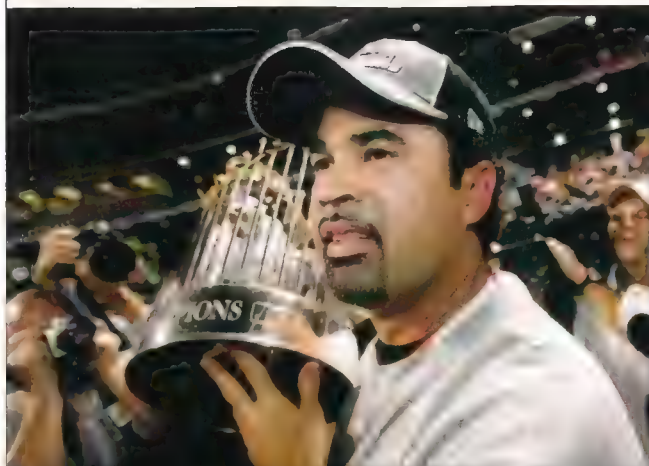


◆ WHEN IT COMES TO CHOOSING A BAT, EACH PLAYER IS DIFFERENT. WHILE SOME ARE FIERCELY LOYAL TO THEIR CHOSEN LUMBER, OTHERS DISCARD POOR PERFORMERS AT THE FIRST SIGN OF A SLUMP. DECISIONS ON THE LENGTH AND WEIGHT OF THE BAT ARE BASED ON FACTORS LIKE A PLAYER'S HEALTH AND WHAT THE TEMPERATURE IS.

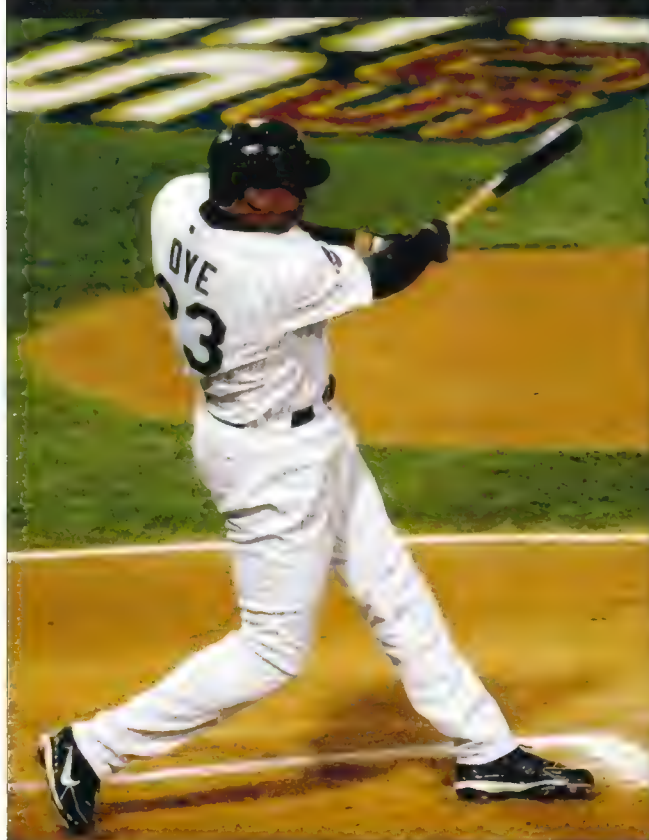


# THE 2000s

After more than 85 years, the **MYTHICAL CURSES** that had haunted a couple of the league's oldest franchises were **LIFTED AT LAST**.



◆ ABOVE: OZZIE GUILLEN CELEBRATES CHICAGO'S 2005 WORLD SERIES TITLE.  
BELOW: JERMAINE DYE, THE 2005 SERIES MVP, WAS A BIG PART OF THE WIN.



**B**ASEBALL'S CURRENT DECADE isn't yet complete, but no matter what happens the rest of the way, it surely will be remembered as the decade when the curses fell. That's because in 2004 and 2005, two teams — the Red Sox and the White Sox — finally broke through to enjoy World Series titles after decades of misfortune.

First came Boston in one of the most memorable post-season runs in baseball history. For a team and a community haunted by years of heartache, it was appropriate that even in their finest hour, the Red Sox didn't make it easy on their fans. For Boston to win a world championship, to kick to the curb the supposed curse that had clouded over them for 86 years, there had to be plenty of tense pacing, heart thumping and nail biting.

And sure enough, a 3-games-to-none deficit in the ALCS to the Red Sox's bitter rivals, the Yankees, did the trick. But when Boston came to, after a disheartening 19-8 shellacking in Game 3, it was an awakening for the ages.

It started with a dramatic end to Game 4. Trailing, 4-3, in the bottom of the ninth, nearly as close to elimination from the playoffs as a team can be, Boston rallied to tie it on an RBI single by Bill Mueller, then won it in the 12th on a two-run home run by the always-clutch David Ortiz. Ortiz did it again the very next night, too, singling to

center to score Johnny Damon from second base to seal the game in the 14th, and the Red Sox were in business. They would jump ahead early in both Game 6 and Game 7 and hold on for the wins.

The roll continued in the World Series, as the Sox outscored St. Louis, 24-12, over four games to earn the sweep. When it was all over and the dust had settled from Boston's furious charge, the players were World Series champs, having won eight consecutive postseason games. The clincher was a 3-0 victory over the Cardinals courtesy of starter Derek Lowe, who also had won the deciding games of the LCS and the Division Series.

"I don't know exactly what this means [to fans]," said Boston starter Pedro Martinez, "but I have a feeling that there are a lot of people who can now die happy."

The following season, fans of the Chicago White Sox were thinking that perhaps it was their turn to celebrate the end of a drought. The South Siders had not won it all since Woodrow Wilson was president, in 1917. But things were looking up, as Manager

## ENCLOSURE

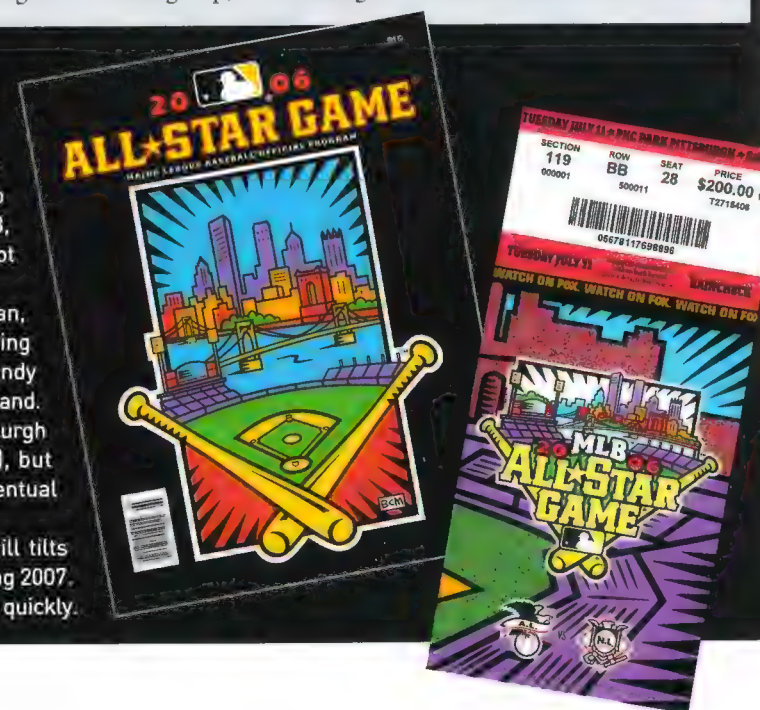
A scorecard from the first-ever regular-season game played by the Washington Nationals. They dropped the April 4, 2005, contest to the Philadelphia Phillies.

## Now It Counts

Over the years, the All-Star Game has become a staple of the summer calendar, providing a grand stage to showcase baseball's brightest stars. Beginning in 2003, the game took on a new role, as the winning league got home-field advantage in that year's World Series.

Most recently, that league has been the American, which was unbeaten in 10 straight All-Star Games following its victory in 2006. The streak began in 1997, when Sandy Alomar Jr. hit a go-ahead homer in the seventh in Cleveland. A decade later it appeared to be coming to an end in Pittsburgh (program cover and ticket stub pictured on the right), but thanks to a two-run triple in the ninth by the game's eventual MVP, Michael Young, the AL kept the streak alive.

The overall All-Star record between the leagues still tilts slightly toward the NL, which held a 40-35-2 edge entering 2007. If the recent trend continues, though, the gap could close quickly.





“They’ve been here a long time,” Boston’s Jason Varitek told *The Boston Globe* of the team’s fans, “and this brought joy to their lives.”



◆ BEGINNING IN 2001, HIS ROOKIE SEASON, ALBERT PUJOLS TOOK THE MAJORS BY STORM. HE WON HIS FIRST RING IN 2006.



◆ JOHNNY DAMON (CENTER), TROT NIXON AND THE 2004 RED SOX CELEBRATE THEIR WORLD SERIES VICTORY OVER ST. LOUIS. WERE IT NOT FOR A FURIOUS COMEBACK AGAINST THE YANKEES IN THE ALCS, BOSTON MAY NEVER HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BREAK THE SUPPOSED CURSE THAT HAD HAUNTED THE CLUB FOR DECADES.

Ozzie Guillen guided Chicago to a tremendous regular season — at 99-63, the team was four games clear of the field in the AL. While the White Sox’s offense was adequate, it was pitching that carried them to a division title.

And it was that very same pitching that would catapult them through October. Beginning with Mark Buehrle in Game 2 of the ALCS against the Angels, Chicago starters ran off a string of complete games like few seen in the modern era. Buehrle, Jon Garland, Freddy Garcia and Jose Contreras combined for four consecutive nine-inning efforts, allowing a total of eight runs, to get to the Series.

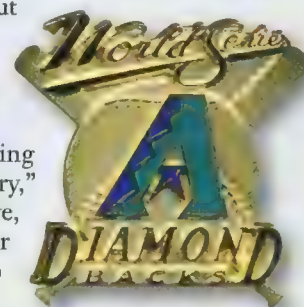
A few relievers actually were needed in the Fall Classic against the Houston Astros, but the results were the same: Four straight victories, including a fitting 1-0 blanking in the clinching game.

“From the start of Spring Training everybody was hungry,” said Series MVP Jermaine Dye, who hit .438 over the four games. “Everybody wanted to go out and win together. Everybody was pulling on the same rope.”

Thanks to their unified execution, another team was free of its supposed curse.

No hex-breaking was needed for the Cardinals to win in 2006 — their first championship since 1982. That’s because, with Albert Pujols on the roster, it probably was only a matter of time.

Pujols debuted in 2001, and promptly struck 37 home runs, hitting .329 and knocking in 130 runs for the playoff-bound Cards. A string of .300-30-100 seasons followed. His defense at first base has steadily improved, to the point where now he is considered one of the best at his position. And when the opportunity has presented itself, Pujols has shown he can be as clutch as they come. The home run he hit in Game 5 of the 2005 NLCS off of Houston closer Brad Lidge is one example. So is the blast he struck in the final week of 2006 to help his team hold on and make the playoffs. Manager Tony La Russa has called him the best player he has ever managed. And in helping St. Louis in 2006, Pujols again showed why.



◆ A PIN HONORING THE 2001 ARIZONA TEAM THAT CAPTURED THE TITLE.



# THE WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC

The INAUGURAL TOURNAMENT illustrated just how far INTEREST IN THE GAME has spread since the days of Alexander Cartwright — and how far it still can go.



**B**ASEBALL HAS COME a long way over the years, from a game practiced by a precious few on local, Northeastern sandlots to a global sport. That was particularly evident at the first-ever World Baseball Classic in March 2006. Teams representing 16 different countries and territories took part in the three-week event, which was created and governed jointly by Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association.

By all accounts, it was a rousing success. As Japan recorded the last out against Cuba to win the final, confetti flying through the air and flags being waved like mad, the event ceased to be simply the World Baseball Classic, a trial balloon lofted into the air to see what would happen. To everyone watching, from ardent supporters to cynical critics, the word “first” became a necessary addendum, as in “the *first* World Baseball Classic” — see everyone again in 2009, when the second World Baseball Classic will take place, and again every four years after that.

Over the next few years, the Classic will be poked and prodded until organizers are satisfied that any flaw has been remedied, every scratch touched up. But there weren’t *that* many people pointing out substantial problems. “It’s easy to pick at something new,” Commissioner Bud Selig said during the event’s early stages. “And everything I’ve ever done new has been picked at. Except it seems that after it succeeds, the pickers have gone away.”

“In this particular case, it’s the coming years that will determine the success, and I’m more confident today than ever before.”

Selig’s confidence is well founded, since almost every player who accepted the privilege of wearing his country’s uniform spoke glowingly of the experience. What wasn’t to love? Whether watching the Japanese champions throwing their manager and national hero Sadaharu Oh into the air after the final, or the Netherlands’ Shairon Martis no-hitting Panama, or watching Derek Jeter and Chipper Jones — two players who have seen plenty of big games in the past 10 years — long-tossing before one of Team USA’s games, the fun never stopped. “It’s career highlight after career highlight every time we take the field,” said Jones.

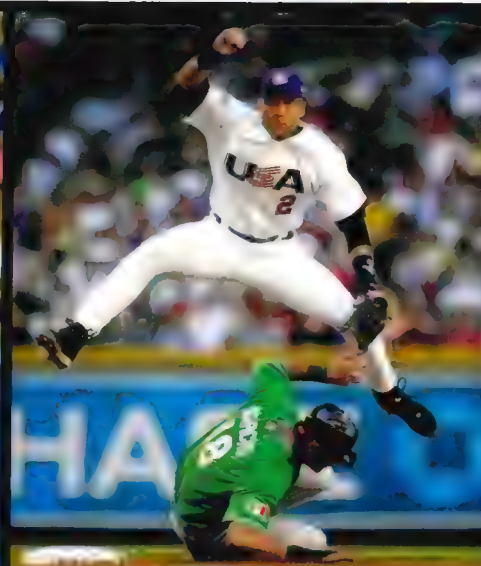
◆ LEFT: THE INAUGURAL CHAMPION, TEAM JAPAN, TOSSES ITS LEADER, SADAHARU OH, IN CELEBRATION. INSET: DAISUKE MATSUZAKA, WHO EARNED THE FIRST WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC MVP AWARD, WAS LIGHTS-OUT ON THE MOUND THROUGHOUT.



“I felt,” said Puerto Rico’s Bernie Williams of the atmosphere at the tournament, “like I was playing in the World Series in March.”



◆ COMMISSIONER BUD SELIG, ALONG WITH THE MLB PLAYERS ASSOCIATION, PUSHED FORWARD THE WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC. ADD IT TO THE LONG LIST OF CHANGES HE HAS MADE, LIKE INTERLEAGUE PLAY, DIVISION REALIGNMENT AND THE WILD CARD.



◆ LEFT: THE CUBAN TEAM CELEBRATES DURING ITS RUN TO THE WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC FINAL. THE SQUAD ONCE AGAIN PROVED ITSELF ON AN INTERNATIONAL STAGE. RIGHT: DEREK JETER AND TEAM USA HAD A TOUGH TIME SIDESTEPPING STIFF COMPETITION FROM AROUND THE GLOBE, FAILING TO REACH THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME.

## ENCLOSURES

Stubs from the final three games of the inaugural tournament, which was won by Japan. Also, the faxed official rosters for Team USA and Team Japan, sent to Major League Baseball prior to the event.

The event’s premiere was billed by many as the first chance to see Major Leaguers representing their countries to decide the true world champion; but the combined rosters of Cuba and Japan, the teams that reached the final, contained just two Big Leaguers — Ichiro Suzuki and Akinori Otsuka, both on the Japanese squad — a testament to how much talent exists around the globe.

While Ichiro batted .364 and Otsuka pitched brilliantly, it was Daisuke Matsuzaka who won the MVP. Matsuzaka, who signed with the Boston Red Sox before the 2007 season, started the final game for the Japanese and, staked to a 4-0 advantage after one inning, was able to hold down the Cubans. By the time he departed after the fourth, Japan led, 6-1, and the bullpen was able to seal the win.

The Japanese were a fitting champion, given that the history of baseball there is rich. Since being introduced in 1872, “yakyu,” as the sport is known there, has become

the nation’s most popular sport. In 1936, Japanese sports officials created Nippon Professional Baseball, and it has been going strong ever since. Starting in 1950, it has consisted of two leagues, the Central and the Pacific, each of which is currently comprised of six teams.

In reaching the championship game, the Cuban squad also displayed its prowess. It’s no surprise, given that the team won gold medals at the 1996 and 2004 Olympics.

They may have made their loudest statement at the tournament in defeat, though. One could have forgiven Cuban Manager Higinio Velez if he had locked himself in his office and refused to speak after the loss to Japan. This was a guy whose team almost wasn’t even permitted to play in the

tournament, and here it had shocked the world, stunning the Dominicans and advancing to the final. Who wouldn’t want to put the whole experience behind them?

Well, Velez, for one. The skipper had his players line up to tip their caps to the Japanese. Then, he sat graciously before the media. “You know who ended up winning?” he asked. “Baseball did. Sports did. Sportsmanship did. What you saw here tonight, we have to do this more frequently. We have to bring the best hitters, and they’ll forget about what they make and play with their hearts and their hands like they did for this tournament.”

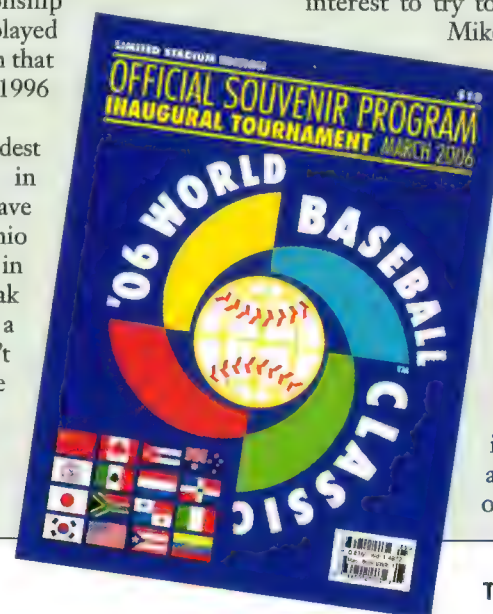
The U.S. team, led by modern legends like Roger Clemens, Ken Griffey Jr. and Derek Jeter, had its ups and downs. The team went 2-1 in group play to advance before falling to Korea and Mexico in the next round. Still, the experience was a positive one. “During the season, we’re at each other’s throats trying to win,” said Mark Teixeira. “But right now, we’re teammates. That’s what makes this special. It’s not a two-day thing. We’re a team. We’re all going toward the same goal. It makes it a lot more fun.”

At the other end of the spectrum were teams like South Africa and Italy — countries with limited baseball history and few natives in the Big Leagues. For them, the World Baseball Classic was a chance to expose young talent to the game’s best and get their citizens excited about the sport.

“I think that’s the reason why we are playing, I mean, the players of Italian descent, we’re trying to get some interest to try to grow the game in Italy,” said catcher Mike Piazza, who played for Italy.

South Africa even managed to shock the baseball public with a strong showing against Canada. The team led, 8-7, going into the ninth before a rally by the Canadians left South Africa just a few runs short.

“The guys were going crazy in the dugout,” said South Africa’s Nicholas Dempsey of taking the late edge. “Unfortunately, we couldn’t close it out, but that was one of the biggest highs that we had, and I think it opened a lot of eyes in the media as well as people in the U.S. that, you know what, we are an amateur club, but we can hold our own with the players out there.”



◆ THE COVER OF THE INAUGURAL WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC PROGRAM FROM 2006.



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## PHOTOS

The photo credits are organized by source. Each shot is listed next to the page on which it appears.

NBLA/MLB PHOTOS: Endpapers: Huntington Avenue Grounds; 6: all; 7: newspaper, sign; 8-9: all; 10: ring; 11: bat, stub; 12-13: all; 14: Wagner; 15: Lindstrom, Ruth, Wheat, glove; 16-17: All; 18: plaque, pitching; 19: program, glove, Gehrig and Ruth, painting; 20: Gehrig, Legends, ball; 21: bat, stub; 22: DiMaggio/Williams; 23: program, stub; 25: Rickey; 26: Berra; 27: Gibson; 28: plate; 29: ticket; 30: program, shoes; 31: ticket; 35: program, glove; 37: ball; 40: pin; 41: pin, program; 43: plaque, 44: lineup card; 45: Mack, program; 46: box score, jersey; 49: program; 51: pin, ball, ticket; 59: pin.

JONATHAN DANIEL/GETTY IMAGES: 2-3: fans.

ROGER RIGER/GETTY IMAGES: 4-5: fans.

BETTMANN/CORBIS: 10: Fisk; 21: Deans; 23: Military uniforms; 29: Yankees; 31: Dodgers; 41: Aaron, Jackson; 42: stamp; 43: Mays (3).

AP: 10-11: Mazeroski; 31: Giants; 32: Finley; 33: Gaedel, Veeck/Doby; 34: Mets; 36: Gibson.

RUSTY KENNEDY/AP: 10: Gibson.

CORBIS: 15: Caruthers.

PHOTOFILE/MLB PHOTOS: 19: hitting; 24: Dodgers; 28: Banks; 29: Branca/Thomson, Thomson homer; 35: Robinson; 36: Lolich; 43: Speaker.

BREARLEY COLLECTION/MLB PHOTOS: 23: Williams.

TONY TOMSIC/MLB PHOTOS: 25: Frank Robinson; 36: McLain.

STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES: 25: Moreno.

TOPPS COMPANY: 25: cards.



MILO STEWART/HOF: 7: Doubleday ball 26: mask; 27: shin guards; 29: ball; 55: jersey  
 BILL LIVINGSTON: 26: Bench.  
 JOHN KLEIN/MLB PHOTOS: 27: Fisk.  
 JED JACOBSON: 27: Piazza; 54: Eckersley.  
 JED JACOBSON/ALLSPORT: 30: Arizona.  
 PAUL CUNNINGHAM/MLB PHOTOS: 31: Nationals.  
 FRANCIS MILLER/GETTY IMAGES: 32: Veeck.  
 OTTO GRUELE/ALLSPORT: 33: Martinez.  
 RICH PILLING/MLB PHOTOS: 33: Wrigley; 35: Seaver, Yastrzemski; 38: Scully; 44: Torre; 46: Rose; 50: program; 57: bat rack; 60: Matsuzaka.  
 LOUIS REQUENA/MLB PHOTOS: 34: Maris; 37: Koufax, Drysdale; 40: Flood; 43: Clemente; 49: Cey.  
 MLB PHOTOS: 38: Harwell; 52: Camden Yards; 53: Jacobs Field; 62-64: fans.  
 SANDY FELSETHAL/CORBIS: 39: Caray sign.  
 JOHN SOOHOO/MLB PHOTOS: 39: Caray; 55: Gagne.  
 DAN DONOVAN/MLB PHOTOS: 39: Buck.  
 ROBERT RIGER/GETTY IMAGES: 39: Barber.  
 FOCUS ON SPORT/GETTY IMAGES: 42: Clemente.  
 DAVID TURNLEY/CORBIS: 44: Anderson.  
 NAT FEIN/MLB PHOTOS: 45: Stengel.  
 SCOTT CUNNINGHAM/MLB PHOTOS: 45: Cox; 51: Maddux.  
 UNIVERSAL STUDIOS: 46: poster.  
 WILLIAM POLO/MLB PHOTOS: 47: Clemens.  
 NEAL PRESTON/CORBIS: 47: James.  
 BASEBALL HALL OF FAME: 47: box score.  
 RICK STEWART/GETTY IMAGES: 48: Ripken; 53: PNC Park.  
 MICHAEL ZAGARIS/MLB PHOTOS: 49: Lopes.  
 BILL STOVER/MLB PHOTOS: 49: Smith.  
 JOE ROBBINS/GETTY IMAGES: 50: Fans.  
 RON VESELY/MLB PHOTOS: 50: Yankees; 56: Weiss; 59: Red Sox.  
 DON SMITH/MLB PHOTOS: 51: Glavine.  
 BRIAN BAHR/ALLSPORT: 51: Smoltz.  
 BILL BAPTIST/MLB PHOTOS: 52: Astrodome.  
 HOK SPORT: 53: Nationals Stadium.  
 CORBIS: 54: Ruth/Shore.  
 VINCENT LAFORET/ALLSPORT: 55: Rivera.  
 DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES: 55: Hoffman.  
 GEORGE GOJKOVICH/GETTY IMAGES: 56: Gwynn.  
 BRAD MANGIN/MLB PHOTOS: 56: Gallego.  
 TODD WARSHAW/GETTY IMAGES: 57: Ball/Glove.  
 JED JACOBSON/GETTY IMAGES: 58: Guillen; 60: Oh.  
 STEPHEN GREEN/MLB PHOTOS: 58: Dye.  
 ELSA/GETTY IMAGES: 59: Pujols.  
 AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES: 61: Team Cuba.  
 JASON WISE/MLB PHOTOS: 61: Selig, Jeter.  
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## MEMORABILIA

CHAPTER 1: Red Stockings photo card, Spalding diagram courtesy of the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

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CHAPTER 7: Babe Ruth promissory note courtesy of the National Baseball Hall of Fame; Ruth letter and autographed photo courtesy of the Babe Ruth Museum.

CHAPTER 8: Gehrig letter, Hall of Fame Centennial scorecard courtesy of the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

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CHAPTER 10: Ticket stub, poster and Jackie Robinson letter courtesy of the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

CHAPTER 12: Russ Hodges' scorecard courtesy of the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

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### Transcript of Lou Gehrig's Letter (p. 20):

My sweetheart — and please God grant that we may be ever such — for what the hell else matters — That thing yesterday I believe and hope was the turning point in my life for the future as far as taking life too seriously is concerned — It was inevitable, although I dreaded the day, and my thoughts were with you constantly — How would this affect you and I? — that was the big question and the most important thought underlying everything

— I broke just before the game because of thoughts of you — Not because I didn't know you are the bravest kind of partner, but because my inferiority grabbed me and made me wonder and ponder if I could possibly prove myself worthy of you — As for me, the road may come to a dead end here, but why should it?

— Seems like our backs are to the wall now, but there usually comes a way out — where, and what, I know not, but who can tell that it might not lead right out to greater things? — Time will tell —

As for our suggestion of farewell tour and farewell day Joe had a different but sensible idea — He said there wasn't anybody more deserving of the remaining salary — and he wasn't afraid of Ed, but with this new set up that question might arise, and if we planned a farewell day to record, newspapermen would interpret it as the absolute finish and that might cause quite a squabble among all the new directors, whereas if we said just a temporary rest and lay off — to come back in warmer weather, there could hardly be any doubt — I couldn't tell you this over the phone because Bill was (letter ends here)

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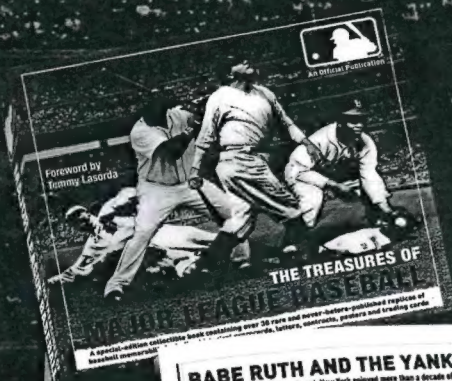
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